



Smart Computing

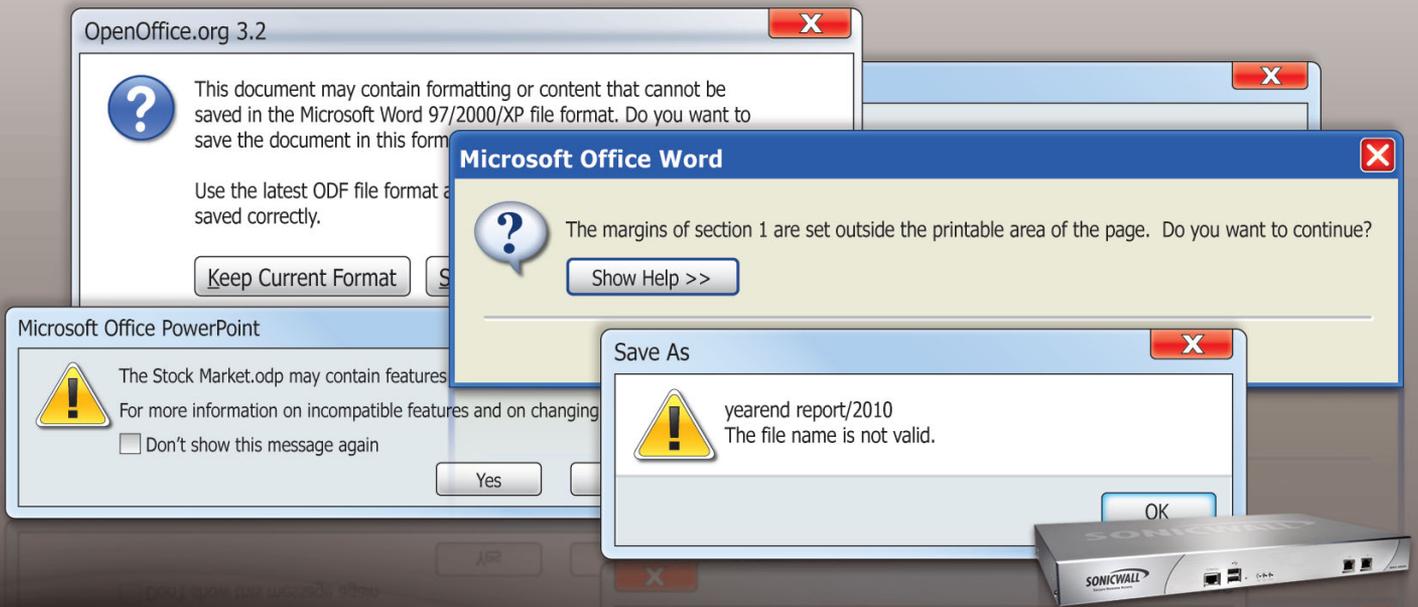
& CONSUMER ELECTRONICS In Plain English

smartcomputing.com

April 2011
Vol. 22 Iss. 04
\$5.99 U.S.
\$7.99 Canada

Solve Software Errors

Get Your Business Apps Back On Track



Build A SOHO PC, Part 2

Assemble The System p.34

Host An Internet Server

Inside, Looking Out p.48

Business Tech

Handle Negative Publicity p.40



Software Review

Suitcase Fusion 3 p.26



1&1® WEB HOSTING



PROFESSIONAL WEBSITES

As the world's largest web host, we know the developer features you need in a hosting package!

.com
.info .org
.net

Domains Included

All hosting packages include domains, free for the life of your package.



Unlimited Traffic

Unlimited traffic to all websites in your 1&1 hosting package.



Developer Features

Extensive language support with PHP 5/6 (beta) with Zend Framework and git version management software.



Online Marketing Tools

SEO tools to optimize your website. 1&1 Webstatistics makes it easy to monitor your progress.



Green Data Centers

We're committed to hosting your site with a minimal impact on the environment.

1&1® HOSTING PACKAGES
**6 MONTHS
FREE!***
OFFER EXTENDED!

1&1® BUSINESS PACKAGE:

- 3 Included Domains
- Private Domain Registration
- 250 GB Web Space
- UNLIMITED Traffic
- **NEW:** Version Management Software (git)
- 2,500 E-mail Accounts
- 50 MySQL Database (100 MB)
- 25 FTP Accounts
- E-mail Marketing Tool
- 24/7 Toll-free Customer Support

~~\$9.99~~
per month*

Need more domains?

.info domain only \$0.99 first year*
.com domain only \$4.99 first year*

More special offers available on our website!



Get started today, call 1-877-GO-1AND1

www.1and1.com

*Offers valid for a limited time only. 12 month minimum contract term applies for web hosting offers. Setup fee and other terms and conditions may apply. Domain offers valid first year only. After first year, standard pricing applies. Visit www.1and1.com for full promotional offer details. Program and pricing specifications and availability subject to change without notice. 1&1 and the 1&1 logo are trademarks of 1&1 Internet AG, all other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. © 2011 1&1 Internet, Inc. All rights reserved.

SOLVE SOFTWARE ERRORS

Solve Software Errors Get Your Business Apps Back On Track	52
Backup Blunders & Compression Conflicts Solve Problems To Get Back In Business	54
PDF Problem-Solving Fix Your Document Management Issues	57
On The Money Solve Pesky Tax & Accounting Software Errors	60
Office Suite Errors Common Problems & Straightforward Solutions	63
Keep Your Tasks On Track Troubleshoot Project Management Software	66
When Good Anti-Malware Goes Bad Troubleshoot Security Software	69



News & Notes

- 7 Technology News & Notes**
- 13 Easy Duplicate Finder Helps Reclaim Disk Space**
Utility Locates, Archives & Reports On Duplicate Files
- 14 News From The Help Desk: Our Most Common Tech Calls**
We tell you the most common problems we're hearing about each month and provide straightforward solutions for each one.
- 16 Small Business Resources**
- 17 Small Business Development Centers**
Assistance For Entrepreneurs

Reviews

- 18 Tech Diaries**
Our *Smart Computing* columnists spent some quality time with computer and computer-related hardware and software to get beyond the benchmark scores, statistics, and marketing hype. Find out what they liked and disliked about their choices.
- 18 Blaine Flamig: Iomega SuperHero**
- 19 Tara Simmons Bantam: TomTom Go 2405 TM**
- 20 Andrew Leibman: Sapphire Edge-HD Mini PC**
- 21 Marty Sems: iRobot Roomba 570**
- 22 Roundup: Project Management Software**
We review the latest from 37 Signals, AEC Software, HyperOffice, Manymoon, HyperOffice, Oracle, and Zoho.
- 26 Software Reviews**
 - 26 Suitcase Fusion 3**
Font Management
 - 27 Nero 10 Multimedia Suite**
Platinum HD
Media Editing & Management
 - 27 ReplyButler**
Boilerplate Email Text



Windows Central

- 28 Windows News, Views & Tips**
Windows 7 Service Pack Released

Computers & Electronics

- | | |
|--|--|
| 30 DIY Project
Printer Maintenance | 38 Create A Video Product Release
The Right Audience & The Right Tools |
| 34 Build A SOHO PC, Part 2
Assemble The System | 40 Business Tech
How To Handle Bad Reviews |

Mac Corner

- 43 A Slice Of Apple: The Mac App Store**
Smart Computing columnist—and Mac guru—Seth Colaner provides tips, tricks, and commentary for the Mac fanatics among us.
- 44 Fresh Fruit**
Great Business Apps For iPad/iPhone/iPod



Plugged In



- 46 Web Tips**
- 48 Host An Internet Server**
Inside, Looking Out

Personal Technology

- 74 Find It Online** **76 Readers' Tips**
Our readers share great ways to solve problems and accomplish PC-related tasks.

77 Ovation

This month, we feature these products:

- Case-Mate Hybrid Tough Case
- ineo Technology Inc. I-NA316N1-R Poseidon NAS Enclosure
- Innovez Biodegradable Case For iPhone 4
- Virgin Mobile MiFi 2200



TECH SUPPORT

- 78 How To Install**
A Media Card Reader
Sure, you can connect an external media card reader to your PC in a matter of seconds, but then it'll sit on your desk, taking up space. Reduce the clutter with an internal reader.
- 80 What To Do When**
Your Password Doesn't Work
- 84 Tech Talk: Processors**
- 87 Pest Control**
- 88 Examining Errors**
- 90 Software Updates**
- 93 Action Editor**
Can't seem to get a response from a vendor or manufacturer? If you need help, we're here for you.
- 94 Tales From The Trenches: Slimming Down**
Real-world tech support advice from PC guru Gregory Anderson. This month, he considers abandoning his desktop PC for portable devices.

Quick Studies

- 33 Adobe Acrobat X Pro**
Time To Take Action
- 51 QuickBooks Premier 2011**
Backup As Easy As 1-2-3
- 83 OpenOffice.org 3**
Create A Mailing List
- 92 Microsoft Office 2010**
Excel's New Sparklines
- 72 Quick Tips**



CarMD® Vehicle Health System | \$119.85 | www.carmd.com

CarMD Is The Computerized “Car Doctor” Instantly Diagnose Your Vehicle’s Problems

Is your car safe? Are you driving with hidden problems or the “check engine” light on? Maybe it’s just a loose gas cap or something covered under a safety recall? But what if it’s something more costly? Thanks to the award-winning **CarMD® Vehicle Health System**, now virtually everyone who owns a vehicle (and a computer) can quickly and easily check their car’s health—right from home.

How Does It Work?

Whether you know a lot about cars or don’t have a clue, CarMD is for you. You don’t even need to lift the hood!

1. Just plug the CarMD handheld device into your vehicle (The CarMD website will show you where you can find your connector under the dashboard on all 1996 and newer vehicles).
2. Within a few seconds, CarMD’s built-in LEDs quickly identify your vehicle’s health (green = OK, yellow = proceed with caution, red = service required).
3. Connect CarMD to your computer using the handy USB link (included). CarMD.com provides you with a

complete Vehicle Health Report featuring empowering information to help diagnose the problem. Now you can walk into any repair shop knowing what needs to be fixed (and what doesn’t) and how much it should cost in your zip code.

Benefits Of Using CarMD

CarMD works on all 1996 and newer cars, trucks, minivans and SUVs—foreign and domestic. It monitors everything that’s covered by a vehicle’s on-board computers, which translates into about 80 percent of the systems ranging from a loose gas cap to a catalytic converter failure. Plus, CarMD customers receive Staying Healthy information, including safety recalls and a list of technical service bulletins for your registered vehicles, which often lead to free repairs.

Purchase also includes toll-free access to Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certified Technicians. Lifetime software and firmware updates mean the CarMD product you buy today will work on the car or truck you invest in tomorrow. ■

“I was leery when the dealership told me that my computer module needed to be replaced for \$1,600. CarMD’s expert auto mechanics and website identified a faulty EGR regulator and total repair cost under \$200. CarMD not only determined what the problem really was, but saved me over \$1,400 in repair costs.”

— Richard K., Calif.



Smart Computing readers get \$15 off.
Purchase online at
www.CarMD.com.

Use promo code: SMART0411
Offer good 'til 06-30-2011

*U.S. Patents # 6,687,584, #6,941,203, #6,947,816

Smart Solutions Advertisement

5 CarMD Is The Computerized "Car Doctor"

Instantly Diagnose Your Vehicle's Problems



Customer Service

(For questions about your subscription or to place an order or change an address.)

customer-service@smartcomputing.com
(800) 733-3809
FAX: (402) 479-2193

To make a payment
Smart Computing
P.O. Box 85673
Lincoln, NE 68501-5380

General inquiries
Smart Computing
P.O. Box 82545
Lincoln, NE 68501-5380

Authorization For Reprints

(800) 247-4880

Hours

Mon. - Fri.: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (CST)
Online Customer Service
& Subscription Center
www.smartcomputing.com

Product Coverage Inquiries

products@smartcomputing.com
(800) 247-4880
131 West Grand Drive
Lincoln, NE 68521

Reader Feedback

editor@smartcomputing.com



Editor's Note

Helping you solve software glitches is an important task for *Smart Computing* each month. After all, as we often point out, some software glitches can stop the program from running at all. And if that program is crucial to your business' operation, it just might bring your business to a halt, at least temporarily. But not all errors crash your software and cause immediate damage.

The recurring error—the one that annoys you weekly or daily—has the potential to be a less dramatic but serious productivity problem. This glitch doesn't cause business to stop, and so you don't stop either. You find a way to work around the error and move on. It makes sense that we ignore error messages or find other ways (usually slower ways) to do the same task. We don't know how long it would take to solve the problem, and we don't feel like we have the time to do the necessary research.

That's where *Smart Computing* comes in. In this issue, we show you how to solve common problems for your favorite business software. Some of them are the slow productivity drains I described. Others really will crash your software. When you spot error messages (and glitches) in these pages that have been bugging you, set aside some time to sit down at your PC with our instructions. When your PC is running smoothly, you'll be glad you did.

Joshua B. Gulick

Joshua Gulick



SmartPeople Computer Support
(800) 368-8304

Online Request:
www.smartcomputing.com/techsupport/contact.aspx
Mon. - Fri.: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (CST)

Corrections/Clarifications

On page 37 of the March issue, we printed an incorrect model name for Microsoft's keyboard and mouse combo. The correct model name is Microsoft Wireless Comfort Desktop 5000.

We printed the incorrect capacity for the Victorinox Flash knife on page 7 of the March issue. The model we referred to has a 2GB built-in flash drive.

DESKTOPS & LAPTOPS (PCs)

Rotate Your Way To Better Productivity

New TouchSmart all-in-one PCs from HP recline 60 degrees to boost productivity in offices and other environments where multiple viewers are present.



Spurred by feedback from users, HP has released all-in-one touchscreen PCs that break the standard desktop mold. These innovative models feature a 60-degree reclining display designed to boost not only ergonomic function but also the capability to share information with other local users.

The HP TouchSmart 610 consumer PC (starting at \$899.99; www.hp.com) and HP TouchSmart 9300 Elite business PC (price not yet announced) both include 23-inch HD (high-definition) displays that recline up to 60 degrees and tilt forward up to 5 degrees. That means you can pull the bottom of the PC toward you so that the entire display is almost flat, in turn accommodating viewers who might be standing or sitting around and over the PC.

The TouchSmart 610 base model includes an AMD Athlon X4 615e quad-core processor, 4GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) RAM, a 750GB

SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) hard drive, ATI Radeon HD 4270 integrated graphics, a Wireless-N LAN (local-area network) card, SuperMulti DVD burner with Lightscribe, 6-in-1 memory card reader, and four USB ports. The 610 includes touch-optimized applications from Hulu, Netflix, Rhapsody, and Twitter, along with HP's own RecipeBox and Web cam apps, and users can add more touch-enabled (and other) applications through the TouchSmart Apps Center. This model also comes with HP's LinkUp, which lets users wirelessly link a notebook PC to the TouchSmart through a home network so users can take advantage of the 610's large screen. Any changes made to files when using LinkUp are saved directly to the notebook (rather than requiring users to move files back to the notebook).

The TouchSmart 9300 is designed for business users or for placement in

kiosks. This model comes with a choice of Intel Core i3, i5, or i7 processors; a maximum 16GB of RAM; a SATA drive with up to 1TB (terabyte) of capacity or an SSD (solid-state drive) with up to 160GB of capacity; seven USB ports; HD audio; integrated Intel graphics (1GB Nvidia and ATI options are also available); and a Kensington lock slot. HP's Power Assistant application presents several power settings for the perfect mix of performance and energy conservation.

The 9300 comes with a choice of Windows 7 Professional 32- or 64-bit, while the 610 includes Win7 Home Premium 64-bit in its base model (premium options of 64-bit Win7 Professional or Ultimate are also available). Like other HP PCs, these touchscreen models are backed by the company's HP Total Care service, which offers 24/7 access to support agents. ■

STORAGE

SSDs For Speed Demons

If you're in the market for speedy storage, check out a new line of SSDs from Plextor (www.plextoramericas.com). Among the first SSDs to support the SATA 6Gbps (gigabits per second) interface, these drives feature impressive read and write speeds that can boost the performance of many applications.

Plextor's new drives use the Marvell 88SS9174 advanced controller chip to help boost read and write performance. The 64GB PX-64M2S (\$179.99) boasts sequential read and write speeds of 370MBps (megabyte per second) and 110MBps, respectively; the 128GB PX-128M2S (\$329.99) has sequential read/write speeds of 420MBps and 210MBps; and the 256GB PX-256M2S (\$699.99) has sequential read/write speeds of 480MBps and 310MBps.

The drives' Dynamic Wear Leveling technology uses data allocation to equally write data into various memory blocks, which helps to reduce memory wipeouts and increase life span. Also onboard is the Unique Instant Restore Function, which works to keep data transfer rates at peak levels even

after prolonged drive usage. All models have a 128MB DDR3 cache, an operating temperature of 32 degrees Fahrenheit to 158 F, shock resistance of 1,500G, and a MTBF (mean time between failure) rating of 1.5 million hours. The drives also support data encryption and SATA Revision 3.0. They're firmware-upgradeable and have a three-year warranty. |



Plextor's new SSDs support the lightning-fast SATA 6Gbps interface and integrate technologies that help improve performance and prolong the life span of the drives.

DISPLAYS

FirePro Cards Handle Heavy Apps

Although today's CPUs are powerful enough to handle certain graphics-related tasks, professionals in the medical, financial, design, and engineering fields continue to require discrete graphics solutions that can easily juggle the demands of multiple applications. AMD is continuing to meet those demands with the release of two new graphics cards.

The AMD FirePro 2270 (\$149; www.amd.com) can support multitasking across several applications, including graphics-intensive apps, yet it is passively cooled (that is, it uses no fan). As such, this quiet card is suited for noise-sensitive environments that still require heavy graphics processing. Further, the 2270 consumes only 10W (watts) on average and a maximum of 15W, and its low-profile, half-length design makes it easy to fit into tight or small-profile PC cases. This PCI-E (Peripheral Component Interconnect Express) card includes 512MB of memory and can drive two 30-inch high-resolution (2,560 x 1,600) displays using DisplayPort, DVI (Digital Visual Interface), or VGA (Video Graphics Array) ports.

Meanwhile, the 1GB FirePro V5800 DVI (\$469) has 800 stream processors, a 128-bit memory interface, and HDR

(high dynamic range) rendering with 8-, 10-, and 16-bit per RGB (red-green-blue) color component support. With two independent dual-link DVI outputs, the V5800 can accommodate performance-hungry applications, such as animation, model manipulation, or MRI scan views, on two separate displays. |



AMD's FirePro V5800 includes two independent dual-link DVI outputs to support simultaneous use of performance-hungry applications on two separate displays.



Hard Drive Crashed? Restart Now, Restore Later

BounceBack is not your Ordinary Backup!



**Startup your system directly
from your Backup Drive.**

**BounceBack
takes the wait out of
a server crash
and gets you up and
running in minutes!**



www.cmsproducts.com
(800) 327-5773

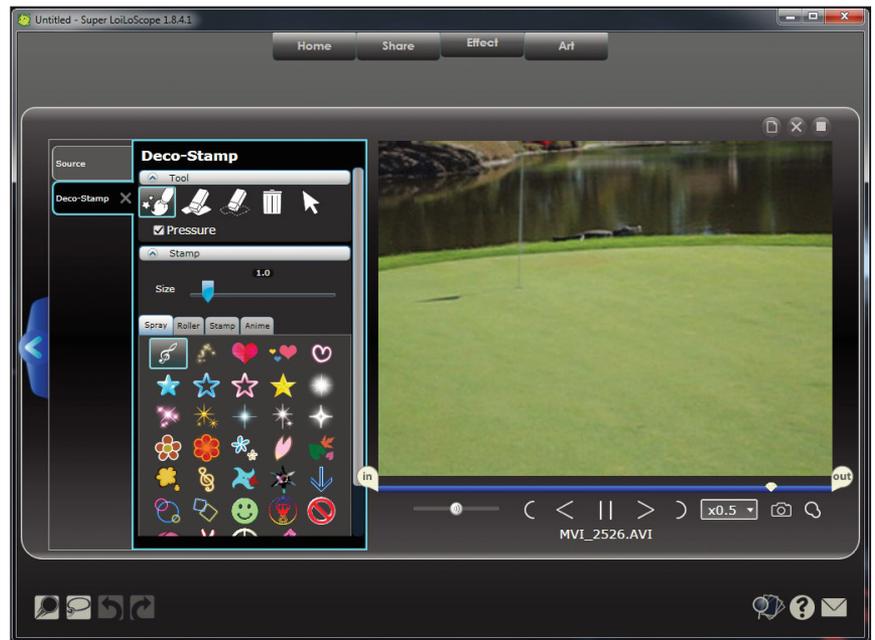
Video Editing Made Surprisingly Easy

Once the territory of only seasoned computer users, video editing has evolved to welcome novice users who typically aren't familiar with the complex ins and outs of the practice. One program that has helped move this space to the beginner realm is LoILO's Super LoILOScope, which uses unique, mouse-friendly navigation to help users design the videos they desire.

Super LoILOScope (\$88; www.loilo.tv) features a unique "infinite desktop" that lets users drag and drop video files onto a desktop-like interface that displays all of the files as thumbnails. Hovering the mouse cursor over a thumbnail instantly spurs the program to play the video, easing the process of identification and navigation through multiple files.

After importing a video file (or multiple files), editing is as simple as clicking the mouse a few times. For example, you can select the beginning and end points from within a video by simply clicking and dragging "in" and "out" buttons. You can also select from a wide range of video sizes (standard definition, high definition, NTSC, PAL, and even YouTube-friendly sizes) and playing speeds.

If you want to blend multiple files into a single video, you can import the files and overlap slider bars so that one video fades away or minimizes into a smaller window-in-window while the next video plays on the full screen. Along with video files, you'll also have the freedom to add pictures and audio files, all of which are displayed as bars on a timeline ruler. These bars can be moved up or down to alter the prominence of the content in the bar. For example, moving a video bar to the top of the timeline will bring that video forward, while moving



Super LoILOScope overcomes the complexities of video editing with intuitive features designed to make editing, combining, and transformation as easy as clicking your mouse.

it down will push it back. You can also scale and rotate objects as you see fit.

Super LoILOScope also includes a wide range of animations and effects including brightness, color, blur, glow, mosaic, negative, monochrome, and others. Other features include still-image cutouts, slideshows, picture quality correction, handwritten text, video capture, video sharing via Facebook and YouTube, and video password protection. Super LoILOScope is also available in a trial version that becomes feature-limited after 30 days. LoILO is also accepting applications for beta testers—if you're interested in applying, send an email to ryu@loilo.tv. ■

PRINTERS & PERIPHERALS

Powerful Multifunction At A Friendly Price

Finding a relatively inexpensive multifunction printer that can handle small office workloads and their unique demands can be a challenge. Yet Brother's new line of all-in-one printers straddles the line between affordability and high-quality features to satisfy those small and home office users.

The MFC-7360N, MFC-7460DN, and MFC-7860DW (\$199 to \$299; www.brother-usa.com) are multifunction monochrome laser printers designed to boost the flexibility of users in different office environments. The flagship MFC-7860DW is the most powerful of the group, with integrated 802.11b/g wireless connectivity and Brother iPrint&Scan, a free downloadable app that lets users wirelessly print JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts

Group) images to (or scan from) Apple mobile devices or Android smartphones.

The MFC-7860DW and MFC-7460DN both feature print speeds up to 27ppm (pages per minute) and automatic duplex technology for producing two-sided prints. The lower-priced MFC-7360N features print speeds up to 24ppm and has scan-to functions for email, files, images, and OCR (optical character recognition). This model includes connectivity via Ethernet and USB 2.0 interfaces. **|**



This Brother multifunction printer integrates high-end features such as duplex printing and fast print speeds at a price that doesn't reflect that of a higher-end model.

DIGITAL MISCELLANEA

Shred Your Worries Away

More than ever, information equals power. For your business, that means your information holds the key not only to success but also potential catastrophe if your data falls in the wrong hands. However, with a mobile service provided by Secure MDE (www.securemde.com), you can rest assured that your hardware meets its end of life safely and securely.

Secure MDE uses a self-contained device called Secure Shark that's designed to provide onsite destruction of hard drives, memory chips, printed circuit boards, integrated circuits, magnetic tape, and other storage media. This device is a twin-shaft, shear-type shredder (mounted on a 28-foot trailer) that can shred up to 500 hard drives per hour into 1-inch shards. Secure MDE captures the entire process on digital video cameras.

The Secure Shark offers peace of mind to customers concerned about data privacy. It also helps reduce onsite equipment and eliminate the cost of packaging and transporting your hardware for destruction. The company's shredding service exceeds EPA, OSHA, state, and local environmental laws, and the shredded materials are recycled according to EPA standards. Secure MDE offers its

service around customers' schedules and conducts the shredding from beginning to end without requiring employees to participate in the process. **|**



Secure MDE's Secure Shark shredder is mounted on a 28-foot trailer and can shred up to 500 hard drives per hour into 1-inch shards—right on the premises of your business.

Chevy Officially Enters The High-Tech Age

When it comes to in-car infotainment, Chevrolet has joined Ford and some other automobile manufacturers with the announcement of Chevy MyLink, an in-vehicle wireless connectivity and infotainment package designed to bridge the gap between smartphone and car.

Slated to appear in the 2012 models of the Chevy Volt and Equinox, MyLink offers a variety of connectivity functions that boost both communication and listening enjoyment for drivers and passengers alike. A hands-free voice control system powered by Nuance lets users issue simple voice commands to initiate phone calls or even select radio stations or media from MP3 players and smartphones. For example, the driver can tap a button on the steering wheel and then issue commands such as “play [artist name]” or “call [contact name]” to a smartphone.

The MyLink system doesn’t see the media on a portable device or smartphone as one big, jumbled mess. Instead, it uses Gracenote to identify the music collection and present tagged information such as artist name, genres, and even album cover art on the MyLink 7-inch high-resolution screen. The Gracenote system also works to enhance the voice activation commands, so users can simply instruct the system to play “The Boss” or “GNR” instead of Bruce Springsteen or Guns N’ Roses.

Although voice commands are preferred to keep the driver’s eyes on the



Chevrolet has joined other high-tech car manufacturers with the upcoming release of MyLink, an in-car infotainment system that lets users issue voice commands to smartphones and portable music devices.

road, commands can also be delivered through the MyLink display, which has several large icons pointing to various sources of infotainment (such as USB-connected music devices, USB key, CD player, radio, etc.). Another button provides access to Pandora Internet radio, which offers the ability to create personalized radio stations. Also included is Stitcher SmartRadio, which supplies thousands of audio programming choices.

When used with navigation, the MyLink screen uses half of its display for infotainment and the other half for navigation, so users won’t be left in

the cold when using one or the other. Chevrolet also includes a Powermat charging system with MyLink, so if your device has a Powermat receiver or jacket, you can simply set it on the Powermat base in the center stack to automatically charge it.

The automaker has not provided details on price, but early estimates place MyLink cost somewhere in the range of Ford’s roughly \$400 Sync when it appears later this year. And while MyLink will be available in only two models to start, it’s expected to appear in more Chevrolet models next year. ■

DULY QUOTED

“When you meet someone face-to-face, you might not know exactly how old they are. But online you might develop these stringent criteria, like ‘If you’re 35, I’ll date you, but if you’re 36, forget it.’”

—Jennifer Gibbs, communications assistant professor at Rutgers, explains how dating-related “flaws” that seem relatively minor offline become magnified online.

Source: *DiscoveryNews*

Easy Duplicate Finder Helps Reclaim Disk Space

Utility Locates, Archives & Reports On Duplicate Files



way, because those files can be very large, and because users tend to collect multiple copies and versions of them.

“Photographers in particular like EDF because they tend to transfer pictures from camera to computer without cleaning out the memory card afterward,” notes Dunigan. “This results in multiple copies of the same photo being stored in different folders. We also added EXIF-checking for photos, so while two photo files may appear to be the same, if their EXIF data is different, then we know that the photos are not really duplicates.”

There are other file-comparison utilities available, but EDF stands out: It’s powerful, yet easy to use. It’s fast and supremely flexible, allowing users to search for duplicates using multiple sets of criteria. And while other products may help you search, they may not help you deal with the results of that search. EDF, on the other hand, can automate the process

 **easyDuplicateFinder**
Managing duplicate files is simple.

Start the hunt for duplicate files by downloading Easy Duplicate Finder from www.easyduplicatefinder.com today!

of choosing which duplicates to delete or archive. Finally, EDF generates useful reports that can be used to log the status and location of files, and which can be exported to other formats.

We all need help dealing with a burgeoning collection of data, and Easy Duplicate Finder can help you reduce clutter, reclaim disk space, speed up backups, and optimize your system. ■

These days, business is all about data: acquiring it, mining it, storing it, managing it. In a digital age, keeping huge amounts of data straight and managing it efficiently is what keeps your business running.

But what if you have files that appear to be duplicates? Could you quickly find the original? How much space could you reclaim by getting rid of obsolete and duplicate files? And what can you do to make sure that they really are duplicates before you get rid of them?

If you’re like most of us, there’s no way you can answer these questions. There’s too much data and too many files of too many types for even the most organized among us to keep it straight. You’re going to need help dealing with the many thousands of files you’re storing.

In this case, that help comes in the form of a handy utility called Easy Duplicate Finder (\$29.95; www.easyduplicatefinder.com).

EDF excels at finding, comparing, and reporting on duplicate files.

“We’ve heard of users freeing up many gigabytes of data,” says WebMinds product manager Chris Dunigan. “If you have duplicate videos or photos, that can add up to a lot of disk space.”

Business users in particular can benefit from EDF’s file-comparison capabilities, says Dunigan. “Many SOHO [small and home office] users have Web sites or use eBay, Craigslist, and other such sites to sell their products. They may accumulate clutter in the form of duplicate photos and documents over time. EDF finds these duplicates and makes managing them simple.”

EDF allows you to search for duplicates of specific file types, such as MP3s, or even duplicates of specific songs. And if you have photos, music, or video, Easy Duplicate Finder may be able to help you clean house in a big

BY ROD SCHER

News From The Help Desk

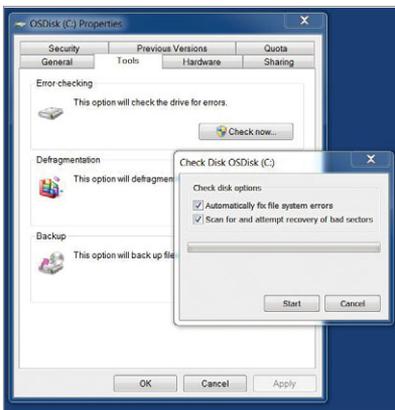
Our Most Common Tech Calls

COMPILED BY ROD SCHER

Each month, we receive numerous technical support calls and email messages. Some computer problems are fairly common, and we find that many callers struggle to resolve the same issues. In this article, we cover some of the most common or timely tech support questions and provide our solution for each of them.

Q When I try to defragment my drive, I get an error message that reads, “Disk defrag cannot continue pre-scan because there is corruption in the file...” and then the message notes a particular file or folder. Can I correct this?

A If your drive has corrupted sectors, it’s best to run Windows’ Check Disk utility (also called CHKDSK); the utility will scan the drive and repair any sector errors it finds. To do so, go to Computer and right-click the drive in question. Select Properties and then the Tools tab. Click the Check Now (or similarly named button) to start CHKDSK. Be sure to select the Automatically Fix File System Errors and Scan For And Attempt Recovery Of Bad Sectors checkboxes. Windows may not be able to check the disk while it’s in use; if so, it will run CHKDSK the next time your system is restarted. Running a scan on a large drive can take an hour or more, so be patient.



Windows’ CHKDSK utility checks your drive for bad sectors and will attempt to correct any errors it finds.

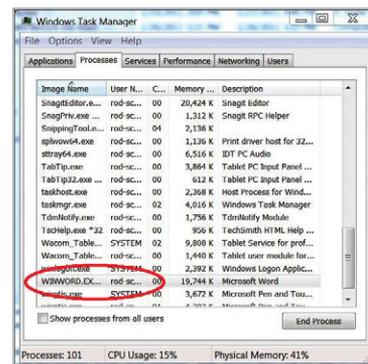
Q After getting a new router, I no longer seem to be able to share my printer. I can print fine from my local machine, but others on the network cannot see or print to the device.

A Look at the firewall settings on your local computer. Norton Internet Security and many other such

applications disable printer sharing as part of their firewall settings. Re-enable printer sharing on the firewall and try printing from a remote system once more.

Q I have some Microsoft Word documents that I’m not using and do not need, but which I’m unable to delete.

A Some process on your system is probably still using those files. Close all of your applications and bring up the Windows Task Manager by pressing CTRL-ALT-DELETE and clicking Start Task Manager. Under the Applications tab, you should see no applications running; if you do, close whatever application showed up (unless it’s your antivirus program, and it happens to be running a background scan). Under the Processes tab, you will see several (perhaps many) tasks still running, even though you’ve shut down your applications. These processes are running in the background. Generally speaking, their presence does not indicate a problem, but look to see if Winword.exe is still running. It should not be, because you closed Microsoft Word. However, perhaps because your system was previously shut down incorrectly, there may be a copy of Word running in the background that is still using—or thinks it is using—the files you’re having trouble erasing. If it’s present in the Processes tab, select Winword.exe and then click End Process. You should now be able to erase your Microsoft Word files.



Occasionally, a leftover process may continue running, which may make it impossible to delete (or move) the file the process thinks it is using. Use Windows’ Task Manager to find and end the rogue process.

Q I just bought a new computer, and I see that it has all sorts of applications, trials, and demos already installed on it. Do I need that stuff? Can I safely delete it?

A Congratulations, you are the proud owner of a large pile of bloatware—that’s the term for all of

the trial applications that hardware manufacturers routinely include on their machines these days. It's not junk, really; there are some genuinely useful applications there. But much of it is simply unnecessary, and it can slow down your system. Go ahead and use Windows Control Panel's Uninstall A Program (or similarly named) option to uninstall any of the programs, including any toolbars. You can and should reinstall an antivirus application of your choosing (many are free for home use) and other such anti-malware tools as soon as possible. There is also software available that is specifically designed to get rid of bloatware; this is useful if you're uncomfortable manually deleting individual programs. Just do an online search for "remove bloatware."

Q I needed to edit a PDF (Portable Document Format) file and discovered that Adobe Reader (get.adobe.com) doesn't have the editing tools I wanted, so I downloaded an alternative PDF reader that has certain editing features. It worked OK, but it converted all of my PDF files to its format. If I send a PDF to a friend, will he be able to open it in Adobe Reader, or must he have the alternative application, too?

A Actually, the application didn't convert the files; it simply changed the file associations from Adobe to its own file associations. To change them back, just right-click any PDF file and choose Properties. Click Open With and then Choose Default Program. Select Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader as the default program. If you would like to make the change permanent, select the Always Use The Selected Program To Open This Kind Of File checkbox.

Q After I did a clean restore on my laptop, my Web cam did not work or show up in Device Manager. How can I get it working again?

A You probably erased or corrupted the Web cam's drivers while restoring your system. If so, the solution is simple enough: Go to the Web cam manufacturer's Web site and download and install a new copy of the driver. Generally, this is a simple process: On the manufacturer's Web site, select your operating system and the model of the Web cam. Download and then run the indicated driver. You'll probably have to reboot your system after the new driver is installed. One advantage of doing this is that you're likely to end up with the most up-to-date driver; in fact, it's not a bad idea to check manufacturers' Web sites on a regular basis, just to see if there are updated drivers available for your peripherals. **I**

Feature Package Topics

Each *Smart Computing* issue includes tips, reviews, and information about a variety of topics. However, each issue also has a featured group of articles about a selected topic. Below is a list of the Feature Packages from the previous year. As a *Smart Computing* subscriber, you have access to all of our archived articles at www.smartcomputing.com.

February 2010:	Upgrade Your Notebook
March 2010:	Troubleshoot Windows 7
April 2010:	Clean Your Computer
May 2010:	Solve PC Errors
June 2010:	Troubleshoot Your Network
July 2010:	Give Windows A Tune-Up
August 2010:	Recover Lost Files
September 2010:	First Aid For Your Gadgets
October 2010:	Do More With Your Network
November 2010:	41 Windows Tips & Tricks
December 2010:	Search Engine Optimization
January 2011:	Solve Printer Problems
February 2011:	Social Networking & Your Business
March 2011:	Backup For Home & Office

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Hardware website interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links for 'United States', 'Change', and 'All'. The main heading is 'Microsoft Hardware'. Below this, there's a sidebar with navigation options like 'Products', 'Resources', and 'Information For'. The main content area is titled 'Download Webcam & Headset Software'. It contains text about software updates for Windows 7 and a form with four steps: 1. Select type of product (Webcams), 2. Select your product (LifeCam VX-2000), 3. Select your operating system (Windows 7), and 4. Select your operating system (Windows 7). A 'Free' badge is located at the bottom left of the page content.

The best way to re-enable a peripheral that suddenly stops working is to reinstall the appropriate driver. Up-to-date drivers, such as these for Microsoft Web cams, are available at the manufacturer's Web site.

Small Business Resources

The Web has a trove of resources for SOHOs (small and home offices) and small businesses—if you know where to look. Find an association that can help you meet your goals; get information from the government about loans, grants, and taxes; and stay up-to-date with the best small business newsletters and blogs. If you have a pressing question, pose it on a forum to see what your peers have to say.



ASSOCIATIONS & SUPPORT

Better Business Bureau

www.bbb.org
(703) 276-0100
4200 Wilson Blvd.
STE 800
Arlington, VA 22203-1838

Main Street Alliance (MSA)

mainstreetalliance.org
info@mainstreetalliance.org
(603) 831-1835
3518 S. Edmunds St.
Seattle, WA 98118

National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB)

www.nfib.com
(800) 634-2669
(615) 872-5800
53 Century Blvd.
STE 250
Nashville, TN 37214

National Small Business Association (NSBA)

nsba.biz
(202) 293-8830
1156 15th St., STE 1100
Washington, DC 20005

SCORE

www.score.org
(800) 634-0245
(703) 487-3612
1175 Herndon Pkwy, STE
900
Herndon, VA 20170

Small Business Development Centers Network (SBDCNET)

www.sbdnet.org
(800) 689-1912
501 W. Durango Blvd.
San Antonio, TX 78207



BLOGS

Signal vs. Noise

37signals.com/svn/posts

Small Business Search Marketing

www.smallbusinesssem.com

Small Biz Bee

smallbizbee.com

Small Business Trends

smallbiztrends.com

The Small Business Blog

www.sme-blog.com

The Entrepreneurial Mind

www.drjeffcornwall.com



FORUMS

Small Business Administration Community

www.sba.gov/community

The Small Business Community Forums

www.smallbusinessforums.org

Small Business Ideas Forum

www.smallbusinessbrief.com/forum

The Young Entrepreneur

www.youngentrepreneur.com/forum

Associations
Blogs
GOVERNMENT
Forums
SUPPORT



GOVERNMENT

Grants.gov

House Committee On Small Business
smallbusiness.house.gov

Small Business and Self-Employed Tax Center
www.irs.gov/businesses/small

Small Business Administration (SBA)
sba.gov

U.S. Copyright Office
copyright.gov

U.S. Department of Labor
dol.gov

U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship
sbc.senate.gov

SMALL BUSINESS Development Centers

Assistance For Entrepreneurs



Haven't the foggiest idea how to harness your entrepreneurial spirit, pull yourself anywhere using bootstraps, or think in or out of a box? Starting and running your own business is tough, but fortunately for prospective and current small business owners, SBDCs (Small Business Development Centers; asbdc-us.org) dispense with the cliché and offer training, counseling, and other assistance to help you craft your vision into a real-world success.

Run A Small Business

Pooling resources from federal, state, and local governments, as well as the private sector and the educational community, The Association of Small Business Development Centers is truly a joint venture with a vested interest in fostering small business growth. For an overview of what the SBDC can offer you and your small business, visit bit.ly/dKYe2a. The SBA (Small Business Administration; www.sba.gov) is partnered with SBDCs.

Help On Your Turf

You may be surprised to learn that there's probably an SBDC branch nearby; there are locations in all 50 states, in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and even in the U.S. territories. There are 63 nationwide Lead Small Business Development Centers coordinating program services for every sub-center and satellite location in each state. Centers are made up of directors, full-time

staff members, and various part-time staff and volunteers.

The best way to contact your nearest SBDC is to visit the Association of Small Business Development Centers' Web site (asbdc-us.org), input your ZIP code into the Find Your Nearest Small Business Development Center text box, and then click Go. The results page will highlight Lead Centers but rank centers in order of those closest to your location. Often, SBDCs partner with universities and colleges, and

Online Training

The SBA also offers a database of online training courses and resources so you can get tips for running and improving your business on your schedule. To find information on classes covering contracting, managing your business, and other topics, visit bit.ly/fxRHcq. Then just click a topic to explore podcasts, how-to articles, videos, and in-depth training.

tend to be found on campuses across the country. On the search results page, you'll also find a link to the local office's Web page, email address, phone number, a fax number if available, and address.

The Closest Thing To A Free Lunch

The services offered may vary by location, but all SBDCs offer many services free of charge. Some typical services you can expect from your nearest SBDC include help with financial, marketing,

production, organization, engineering, and technical problems and access to feasibility studies that can flesh out a fledgling business plan. Some SBDCs also offer affordable training seminars to help with various aspects of running a business. You can also rest assured that your business with the SBDC will remain confidential.

Women's Business Centers

The SBA offers WBCs (Women's Business Centers), which directly serve female entrepreneurs through nearly 100 educational centers nationwide. This organization strives to assist women in overcoming the hurdles they face in today's business environment by offering business management training and technical assistance to all women, with a special emphasis on economically or socially disadvantaged women. The services and training programs are also commonly offered in multiple languages to enable those who speak English as a second language or are still learning English. To find your nearest WBC, visit bit.ly/hs3st2.

Small Business, Big Payoff

Small business owners know that achieving success is about taking risks, innovating, and making tough decisions day in and day out. Thanks to the services offered at the SBA, SBDCs, and WBCs, you're not on your own. ■

BY ANDREW LEIBMAN

Iomega SuperHero Backup & Charger For iPhone

It Could Save You From Disaster

Blaine Flamig

Send your comments to
blaine@smartcomputing.com



SuperHero Backup &
Charger For iPhone
\$69.99
Iomega
(888) 516-8467
www.iomega.com

For a device that goes by the name “SuperHero,” the small hunk of brushed metal that is Iomega’s SuperHero Backup & Charger For iPhone is fairly unassuming physically. (Maybe it’s a Clark Kent thing that Iomega is after.) What is heroic about the SuperHero is its ability to bail you out of a jam. Specifically, the SuperHero backs up contacts and photos saved on an iPhone/iPod touch (iPhone 4, 3GS, 3G, and 4th-generation iPod touch supported) to a 4GB SD card (you can upgrade to a larger capacity if needed) Iomega includes and that slips into a slot at the back of the SuperHero.

Thus, if you lose, damage, or have your iPhone/iPod touch stolen, the SuperHero can restore your contacts and photos to a new or repaired iPhone/iPod touch.

Upon reading that first paragraph, an immediate and obvious question is why pay roughly \$70 for something that doesn’t do anything that Apple’s iTunes can’t do (and without costing you a cent)? You might also be correctly thinking that the SuperHero actually does less than iTunes, as it only backs up and restores photos and contacts and not music, videos, apps, calendar information, notes, and more as iTunes can.

The answer to the question is directly tied to what type of iPhone/iPod touch user you are. In one camp are those who are diligent about syncing their devices daily or every couple of days and subsequently back up their device-stored data with iTunes. In the other camp are those who aren’t. These users, in fact, may go weeks or longer between syncs, instead generally relying on a bedside dock or other electronic charger to juice their devices. Should one of the unfortunate events detailed in the first paragraph occur, however, gone are the photos and contacts failed to be backed up. If you do your bedside charging with the SuperHero, however, you’re just a restore away from getting those photos and contacts back should disaster strike.

Besides being a viable option for inconsistent syncers, the SuperHero is also a largely

no-fuss proposition usage-wise. You must download Iomega’s free SuperHero Backup app from the App Store to your respective device, but then all that’s required is plugging the dock into an electric outlet and docking your iPhone/iPod touch (make certain to unlock the screen first). The app will then immediately launch. Upon the initial sync, the app grants you 30 seconds to intercede before going about backing up your photos and contacts.

The app itself is a simple affair, and navigating it shouldn’t pose any problems. You’ll find an option to encrypt photos and contacts, but backups are stored to a proprietary file format that only works with supported iOS devices, so it’s arguable how necessary the feature is. For example, if your iPhone is stolen and you replace it with, say, an Android device, you’d have to borrow an iPhone/iPod touch to perform a restore and transfer the data to iTunes vs. restoring the data straight to the Android device. Elsewhere, the SuperHero supports backing up multiple iPhone/iPod touch devices to the same 4GB card, although backups are stored using fairly unintuitive character-based names.

Another notable caveat of using the SuperHero is the sluggish transfer times you’ll suffer through during an initial backup of photos. Although backing up contacts moves along at a reasonable pace, the photo process occurs far less quickly. If you need to back up hundreds of photos initially, you should expect to devote a good overnight’s worth of time or longer to the task. Positively, after the initial backup, the SuperHero only backs up photos and contacts you’ve added between syncs.

Overall, whether the SuperHero is a good fit for you depends greatly on how often you use iTunes and what value you place on your contacts and photos. For those who can’t afford spending the time needed to piecemeal lost contacts back together, \$69.99 may be a small price to pay for knowing contacts are always just an SD card away. ■

A GPS Device For Businesses

TomTom Go 2405 TM

Tara Simmons

Send your comments to
tara@smartcomputing.com



Go 2405 TM
\$299.95
TomTom
(866) 486-6866
www.tomtom.com

Small and home office demands often send us to unfamiliar places, whether it's a meeting across town, a trip across the state line to get the best deal on supplies, or multiple delivery stops. A good GPS (global positioning system) device will lead you in the right direction, and the TomTom GO 2405 TM, which I recently tested, offers some nice extras for anyone trying to find his way in unfamiliar territory.

The 2405 is one of the first GPS devices from TomTom to feature the company's new-and-improved interface, and I found using it was simple and intuitive. The 2405 gave me a quick tour of the new screen layout when I first powered it up, walking me through the different icons on the main screen and showing me how to repeat a driving direction, adjust the volume, and other important functions. TomTom promises a high-speed algorithm for quicker route planning, and the 2405 also boasts a new physical design with a multitouch capacitive 4.3-inch glass touchscreen that I found quick and responsive. It's also slim and lightweight at 3.1 x 5 x 0.75 inches (HxWxD) and 7.5 ounces. Elsewhere, the 2405 comes with a newly designed windshield mount that uses an effective twist-to-lock suction mechanism for the cradle and a strong magnet to hold the GPS device securely in the cradle.

When I put it through its paces by asking it to direct me to a variety of places I drive to regularly, the 2405 consistently gave me logical directions, automatically choosing the fastest route. (You can adjust the settings so the 2405 offers up the shortest or most fuel-efficient route, among other options.) And when I trialed it in places I'm less familiar with, it offered easy-to-follow commands that led me along the right path. Voice commands were clear and easy to understand, volume was adequate even when I was driving on the

interstate, and the 2405 even offered lane guidance to steer me through particularly tricky lane changes. It also offers traffic updates for larger cities to help avoid busy streets. The traffic update receiver is built into the car charger, so it must be attached and plugged in to get the traffic updates.

Along with easy-to-find safety tools, such as Drive To Help and Where Am I buttons, the 2405 is also Bluetooth-capable, so I could connect it to my Bluetooth-enabled phone wirelessly and make and receive hands-free phone calls. It also understands a select number of voice commands, so I could, for instance, tell it to call my husband and then have a conversation through the GPS device without ever picking up my phone. There were a few times when I found myself repeating commands, but once I learned the wording that it most easily recognized, using the voice recognition got easier.

The 2405 also offers lifetime map updates (four per year), which you can download via a Web-connected PC, so your device always has the latest available maps. Furthermore, you can make corrections to a map if you find an error; for instance, I adjusted a speed limit and added a new POI (point of interest) that didn't appear on the map. Better yet, you have access to corrections made by other TomTom users, so you can keep up with the ever-evolving road system and the new businesses that crop up every day.

Navigating the 2405's menu system was straightforward and simple with big, clearly labeled buttons, though typing an address or POI name with the on-screen keyboard sometimes required a couple tries because of the combination of an ultra-sensitive screen and somewhat small letters. There was some glare in bright, direct sunlight that made the device difficult to see, but overall, the TomTom 2405 TM was easy to use, and it reliably directed me to both familiar and unfamiliar addresses. ■

Sapphire Edge-HD Mini PC

Lilliputian But Not Limited

Andrew Leibman

Send your comments to
andrew@smartcomputing.com

One facet of technology that continues to enthrall me is how small devices are always getting smaller, yet with each hardware generation, we're able to do even more with them than ever before. The Sapphire Edge-HD Mini PC, an entry-level desktop computer, is the perfect example of impressive performance in a smaller-than-iPad package. This thing does it all, and for less than you might expect.

Big On Features

The rectangular Edge-HD is 7.6 x 5.8 x 0.9 inches (HxWxD), and it has vents built into the two convex edges. You can lay it flat or attach the included vertical mount; either way, the Edge-HD is easy to hide but attractive enough that you might want to display it.

Believe it or not, the Edge-HD is a fully featured PC with four USB ports, a Gigabit Ethernet port, built-in 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi, line-out (speakers/headphones) and line-in (mic) ports, and it weighs in at just slightly more than a pound. The unit features both VGA (Video Graphics Array) and HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) video outputs, letting you connect it to a standard PC monitor that supports a resolution up to 2,048 x 1,536 or a 1080p HDTV. There's also an HDMI-to-DVI (Digital Visual Interface) adapter in the box.

Under the diminutive hood of the Edge-HD is a 1.66GHz dual-core Intel Atom processor; 2GB of DDR2-800 memory; and a generous 250GB hard drive.

Your Other PC Is An Energy Hog

Power consumption is equally inconspicuous; the Edge-HD consumes just 22W (watts) when running full tilt, but in more common usage scenarios, it'll consume much less. According to Sapphire, a standard desktop PC devours up to 10 times as much power as the Edge-HD. In a small office scenario, a dozen Edge-HD Mini PCs in place of standard desktops can significantly slash yearly energy costs.

No Video Slouch

Despite its size, the Edge-HD packs a mighty graphical punch in the form of Nvidia's second-generation Ion graphics, which features 512MB dedicated video memory and a graphics core based on Nvidia's GeForce 210 discrete notebook GPU (graphics processing unit). With this kind of horsepower, you'll get significantly better performance (compared to integrated graphics) in 3D applications, such as games. It also offers hardware-accelerated 1080p HD video playback support, which, when coupled with the Gigabit Ethernet port, makes this an ideal telepresence and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) platform.

OS Options

Although the Edge-HD doesn't come pre-loaded with a Windows operating system, it does meet the hardware requirements for Windows XP/Vista/7. Sapphire configured the Edge-HD to launch FreeDOS upon first boot, which is a free DOS-compatible operating system; but there's no GUI (graphical user interface), and you'll just get a command prompt when you turn it on. I tested it by installing Ubuntu Linux 10.10 (Maverick Meerkat), but you can install an OS via a USB optical drive and a Windows disc of your choice or a thumb drive that contains a Windows ISO (International Organization for Standardization) disc image on it.

After using the Edge-HD for a week, I was able to access the Web, create documents and spreadsheets, watch videos, listen to music, and even do a little multitasking without feeling like the system was overly taxed. I would have liked to bypass USB's molasses-in-January data rate with an eSATA (external Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) port. Also, the Edge-HD could use a VESA (Video Electronics Standards Association)-compatible mount for attaching it to the backside of an HDTV. If one or more new PCs are in your budget, you'll find lots to love about the Edge-HD. ■



Edge-HD Mini PC
\$389
Sapphire
tech@althonmicro.com
www.sapphiretech.com

iRobot Roomba 570

Vacuuming's A Dirty Job, But No One Has To Do It

Marty Sems

Send your comments to
marty@smartcomputing.com

For someone who hates to clean, I have been known to enthuse over cleaning products that work well. Once, while using a Swiffer WetJet, I exclaimed to my wife, "It's like a maid on a stick!"

With a Roomba, small-business owners can feel just as excited. If you don't pay a professional service to tidy up your SOHO (small office/home office), you or one of your employees has to do it. That can mean overtime, reduced productivity, and/or resentment toward messy co-workers.

Enter a robot vacuum from iRobot's Roomba family. I asked the company for something suitable for a small or home office, and

it loaned me a model 570. It's very similar to the 572 Pet Series vacuum, but it comes with fewer extras. (For hard flooring, iRobot also sells Scooba automatic scrubbers.)

First, my wife and I had to decide what to name our Roomba. R2? Twiki?

In the end, after watching it noodle about cleaning our carpet with single-minded purpose, I named it after my mother.

Our 570's low profile let her vacuum under our beds and dining room chairs. She sensed the brink of our stairs and never fell. And true to iRobot's word, our Roomba didn't "eat" electrical cords lying on the floor.

Sometimes a dog toy or water dish tray would stop her, though. In each case, she turned this way and that, as if trying to decide which way to go. Then she would putter on.

Later she learned to traverse the transom of a tile floor instead of stopping at its border. She seemed to clean tile and linoleum as well as she did carpet.

Our floor looked much cleaner. It didn't have that deeply brushed look our upright vacuum gives it, but it was just about devoid of dog hair. The Roomba even whisked dog fur out of the edges of our baseboards; normally, with our upright vac, we have to use a hose attachment to get these clean.

After an hour or so, our Roomba parked herself on her recharging dock for the night. As iRobot suggested, I placed the back of the dock against something heavy so the Roomba wouldn't accidentally push it around.

Among its included accessories, the 570 comes with a remote you can use to power up the unit and steer it to a particular mess. You can also schedule this model to automatically clean several times a week.

Our unit didn't always return to her recharging dock, however. Occasionally, I'd find her snoozing under a bed. Once she lodged her nose under a deacon's bench and couldn't get free. Another time, something knocked one of her front sensor bumpers off its track a little. But she told me what was wrong—literally—and I fixed it easily. A Roomba isn't designed to replace your upright vacuum entirely. You'll still need something to do your stairs, for one thing.

Also, after each vacuuming session, you're supposed to spend a few minutes cleaning out your Roomba's bin, brush, bearings (use tweezers), filter, and front wheel. This isn't exactly pleasant. Still, it takes a lot less time and effort to clean out a Roomba than to push an upright vac around your office.

Long story short, our floors have never looked so good for so long. The fact that I'm thinking about prying open my dusty wallet to buy one is more of an endorsement than anything else I could write. ■



Roomba 570
Vacuum Cleaning Robot
\$449.99
iRobot
(800) 727-9077
www.irobot.com

Roundup: Project Management Software

Manage Projects Of Any Size Or Complexity

Time was, project management took place on a paper notebook and between your ears. Now, software makes that all easier and provides powerful collaboration tools to keep your whole team on track.

Project management software is available in a wide range of prices, features, and capabilities, from free barebones products such as Manymoon (www.manymoon.com) to more feature-rich ones such as Oracle's Primavera (www.oracle.com). Some applications are cloud-based, so users can access their projects remotely, while others are locally installed tools.

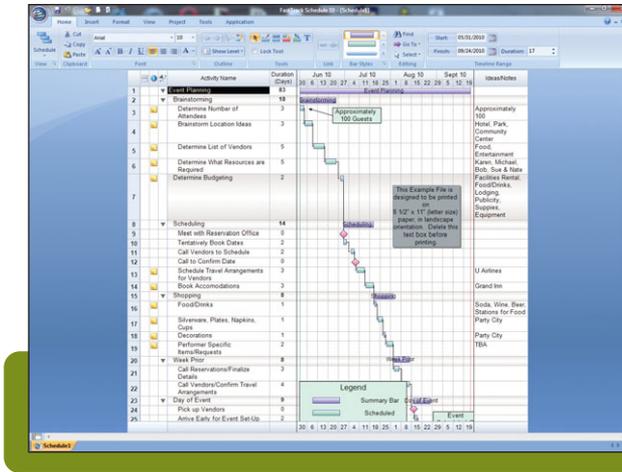
AEC Software FastTrack Schedule 10

FastTrack Schedule 10 from AEC Software is cross-platform (Windows and Mac) project management software designed to be affordable (a new license is \$349), easy to use, and flexible, while offering all the features any small office user needs without being overkill.

It's specially designed for multitaskers who need to both run a business and also develop strategies and business plans.

FastTrack Schedule 10 is designed with the look and feel of Microsoft Office's Ribbon interface in an effort to provide continuity between those programs for users. (However, if you prefer, you can switch back to a "classic" FastTrack interface.)

There are plenty of video tutorials and tours at startup to help users become adept at using the software quicker. The software also includes templates to aid in project creation. The templates are customizable and



AEC Software
FastTrack
Schedule 10

users can also create and save their own templates.

FastTrack Schedule 10 features three "views": Schedule, Calendar, and Resource. In the Schedule view, you can enter activities, the duration of each activity, notes about each one, and graphical charts to provide a visual representation of all activities across a timeline. If you need to change the duration of an item, you can simply click and drag one of the graphical bars, and the others adjust accordingly.

The Calendar view, which lets you layer on the company calendar to include items such as employee vacation, displays various tasks across days on the calendar. The Resource view displays all the resources needed for a given project, organized by employee; you can see who has accomplished

specific tasks across a period of time, measured in hours.

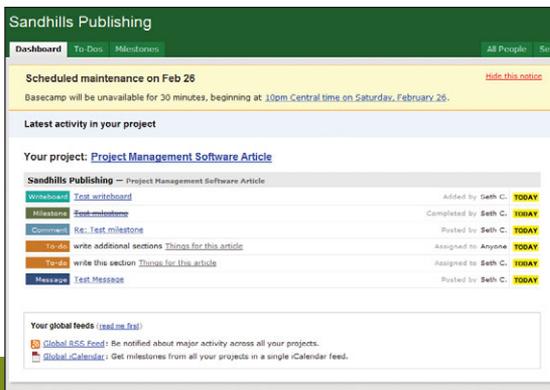
You can also consolidate projects, add photos, and open Windows Project or MindManager files, too.

Basecamp

Basecamp is a very basic project management tool. However, it's part of a larger suite by 37signals (37signals.com), so if you need functionality beyond basic project management, you can add on Highrise, for managing your contacts; Backpack, which is a tool to handle internal communications; and Campfire, which lets users collaborate in real time. Based in the cloud, Basecamp requires no local installation, so users can access it from anywhere.

BUYING TIP

There are project management tools for every budget and company need, and most have free trials or limited free accounts available. Try out several applications before you buy.



Basecamp

When you create a new project, you can give it a name, create logins for other users, and include other companies or clients in the project if it's appropriate. You can upload a logo and change the color scheme to more accurately reflect your company's aesthetic, too. Adding additional people to the project is as easy as sending an email invitation from within Basecamp.

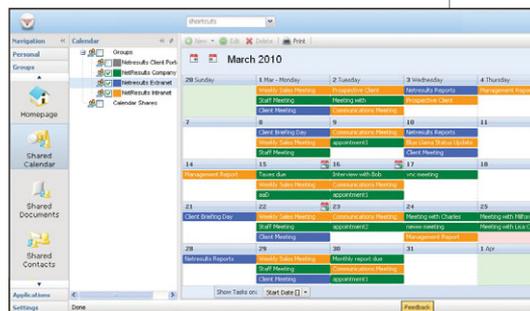
A dashboard displays a running list of all the activity related to a project. Each project has Overview, Messages, To-Dos, Milestones, and Writeboards tabs; depending on the type of account you pay for, you also have Chat and Files tabs, which allow you to interact with other project contributors in real time and upload, store, and share files.

It's standard for project software applications to have task lists and milestones, but Basecamp also has Writeboards; these are simply pages where anyone can add content or comments. It's basically a space for everyone on the project to brainstorm, edit a common document (it tracks changes), and add other input.

HyperOffice Collaboration Suite

HyperOffice Collaboration Suite is a popular cloud-based suite of tools for business productivity that includes project management, document management, contact management, and more.

The program lets users manage everything via a centralized online interface. The project management part



HyperOffice Collaboration Suite

of the suite allows you to create an unlimited number of projects and associated tasks. You can set timelines for each and assign responsibilities to the appropriate employees.

You can easily attach resources to tasks and projects and keep track of each person's progress in assigned tasks with graphical Gantt charts.

Users can create groups for various projects. Each group gets a communal work space in which members can communicate and collaborate on documents. Because the HyperOffice Collaboration Suite is a hosted service, workers can access, edit, and contribute to projects from any location.

As users work on documents, they can track their changes and receive notifications about updates. The

administrator can manage access permissions. The calendar feature syncs with Microsoft Outlook, so Outlook users receive meeting invitations and they can coordinate their individual calendars and schedules.

With Contact Management, users can create and organize contacts, import or export contact lists from other services, and share contacts with other project team members.

Manymoon

Manymoon is another simple, cloud-based project management tool—or, as the Manymoon Web site calls it, "social productivity." It easily integrates with Google (www.google.com): You can even log in and create an account with your Google login credentials, import Google Docs files,

and embed a Manymoon tasks list within iGoogle or Google Sites as a Google Gadget.

Manymoon offers four tiers of accounts. The Standard account is free, and the Silver, Gold, and Platinum accounts cost \$19 a month (\$170 a year), \$29 a month (\$260 a year), and \$49 a month (\$440 a year), respectively.

The Publisher Module at the top of your main screen allows you to post status updates to let others on the project know what you're working on. From this area, you can also share links, documents, and events. This is also where you create projects and assign tasks. Below your status is a list of all project activity. It feels very similar to a personal Facebook page.

You can easily add individuals to a project by inviting them via email, or you can import contacts from LinkedIn

BUYING TIP

If your project management needs include billable hours, make sure the application you buy allows you to track hours for all users.



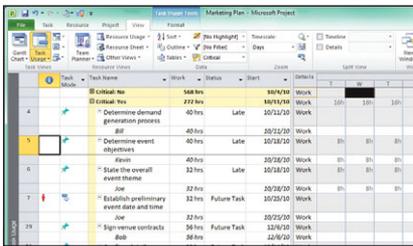
Manymoon

(www.linkedin.com), Google Apps, Gmail, or Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com). You can add hours worked to a project in the Project Time Sheet area, and Manymoon automatically creates reports to show progress on tasks and milestones as well as information on document storage and links.

Microsoft Project Professional 2010

Microsoft Project Professional 2010, part of the Microsoft Project family that also includes Microsoft Project Standard 2010 and Microsoft Project Server 2010, lets users collaborate on projects with individuals, project teams, or the entire organization.

Designed to fit with other Microsoft Office products to provide users with a unified experience, Project Professional uses the Ribbon interface that Microsoft Office users are familiar with. Further, the program incorporates Microsoft Excel features such as text wrapping, filtering, auto-complete, scroll, and zoom.



Microsoft Project Professional 2010

Project Professional is designed to make selecting resources, setting deadlines, adding tasks and milestones, and formatting and customizing Gantt charts as easy as possible. Users can even copy and paste bulleted lists from other applications without dealing with formatting headaches.

You can manually create schedules, or the program can automatically calculate and create project schedules from your entered criteria. When creating schedule data, you can enter high-level items first and then fill in the details as you go.

The Timeline View employs simple but elegant graphics that you can copy

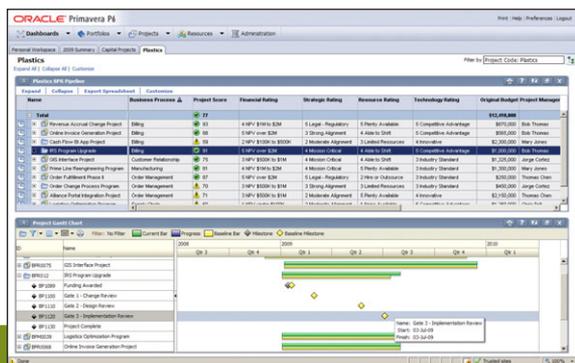
and paste into email or other documents to share your progress with clients or others. Managing complex resources and individuals' workloads is made easier with the graphical Team Planner; you can hover over an item to see its details and drag and drop tasks to work them into the schedule.

Microsoft Project Professional 2010 syncs with Microsoft SharePoint Foundation 2010. You can save Project schedules as SharePoint task lists, and when you update one program, the changes will sync with the other—as well as with Microsoft Project Server 2010 for enterprise-wide and browser-based collaboration.

Oracle Primavera P6

Primavera P6 Professional Project Management from Oracle is a full-featured product designed for SMBs and enterprises. It's available as a stand-alone application, and if users need more functionality, they can purchase additional modules. The modules include Contract Management, Cost Management, and Risk Analysis, in addition to Project Management.

The software has a variety of facets. You can use it to select and monitor portfolios, which gives you a



Oracle Primavera P6

BUYING TIP

Consider your workforce. If you have many remote workers, freelancers, or employees that frequently travel, you may find that a cloud-based solution is ideal. If instead the majority of your collaborators are in one location, a locally installed application may be best.

high-level view of projects, including detailed information on customers, costs, and risks, that is designed to help you determine strategic goals and measure performance. Project portfolios can be prioritized, and you can customize their appearance, as well.

Primavera P6 also allows you to create project proposals and route them to the appropriate people and evaluate incoming projects by ROI (return on investment).

When undertaking any project, determining resources is one of the biggest challenges; Primavera P6 enables you to balance employees' skills and availability with the projects you want to take on, and with graphical Gantt charts, you can easily move items around to reallocate resources.

Of course, you can plan and schedule activities and assign tasks to specific dates. The program includes templates, and users can employ different views to see the big picture of how project resources are distributed. Primavera P6 lets you change an item in a project and then reallocate resources as needed. As a project progresses, the software lets you track the progress and juggle your available resources accordingly.

Primavera P6 can scale from very basic to more advanced easily; users

have a great deal of flexibility within the product's capabilities.

ZoHo Projects 2.0

ZoHo Projects 2.0 is a cloud-based project management tool that includes project planning, tracking, and collaboration in one package. A free account offers one project with an unlimited number of users, 10MB of storage, one Wiki, and one chat, but lacks time- and bug-tracking. The Value Pack 1 (\$99 per year), Value Pack 2 (\$199 per year), and Value Pack 3 (\$699 per year) offer proportionally more features, including increased storage, project templates, and tracking features. Monthly subscriptions are also available.

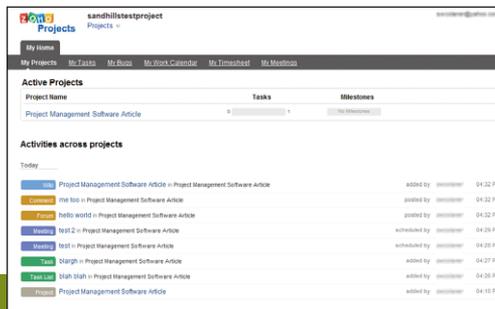
ZoHo Projects features integration with other ZoHo tools as well as with

Google Apps, and users can import files from Microsoft Project and Basecamp. Its Dashboard is strongly reminiscent of Facebook, with a user photo and status update bar above a list of pertinent project activity. From the Dashboard, you can also view others' statuses and post announcements.

ZoHo Projects 2.0 has several powerful features. The Time Tracking feature tracks hours according to the calendar, but users can also do so with a stop/start timer for especially accurate hour billing when working on a given task.

Users can upload files to a centralized document area for easy communal viewing. Further collaboration occurs through a project Wiki, where anyone can add information about a task, as well as Project Chat. The chat feature is akin to always-on instant messaging and lets you create as many chat rooms as you need and archives all conversations for future reference. ■

BY SETH COLANER



ZoHo Projects 2.0

PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE AT A GLANCE

Product Name	Price	Company	Contact Info	URL	OS Compatibility	Notable Features
Project Professional 2010	\$905.99*	Microsoft	(800) 642-7676	www.microsoft.com	WinXP/Vista/7 & Server 2003/2008	Designed with the same UI scheme as Microsoft Office products
FastTrack Schedule 10	\$349	AEC Software	(800) 450-1985	www.aecsoftware.com	WinXP/Vista/7 & Mac OS X	Cross-platform to enhance interoperability between users
Basecamp Premium	\$99 per month	37signals	email@37signals.com	basecampq.com	N/A	Writeboards for collaborative brainstorming and editing
Projects 2.0	\$35 per month	ZoHo	(888) 900-9646	www.zoho.com	N/A	Users can import files from Basecamp and Microsoft Projects
Manymoon	Free	Manymoon	support@manymoon.com	www.manymoon.com	N/A	Integration with Google Apps and LinkedIn
Collaboration Suite	\$44.99 per month	HyperOffice	(800) 434-5136	www.hyperoffice.com	N/A	Microsoft Outlook integration
Primavera	\$2,500	Oracle	(888) 672-2534	www.oracle.com	WinXP/Vista/7	Usability can be increased with the purchase of additional modules

*as configured at CDW (www.cdw.com)

Suitcase Fusion 3 Font Management

\$99.95 | Extensis
(503) 274-2020 | www.extensis.com



If you have ever struggled to make sense of the fonts (typefaces) that come with Windows and your various programs, Suitcase Fusion 3 may be a solution you'll appreciate. Extensis has an illustrious history of font management for Mac operating systems, and it has also offered a Windows edition for several versions now.

First Look

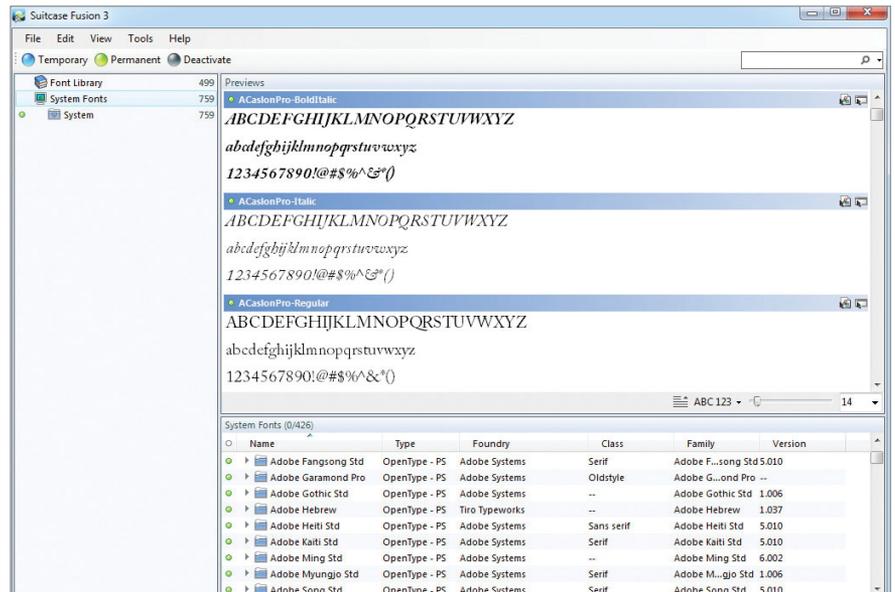
Fusion 3 is available boxed or as a download (for the same price). An unlimited, 30-day trial is also available. Your purchase includes a one-year, Personal subscription to WebINK, an integrated font "rental" service that affords access to fonts for use on the Web without purchase of the underlying typeface.

Fusion 3 requires both Microsoft Runtime V. 10 and .NET Framework 4, neither of which will likely be installed on the average system. (Both were lacking on our test machine running Windows 7 Ultimate.)

After you install these, Fusion 3's installation completes very quickly. You can opt for a custom install, but we recommend Complete to avoid missing any functionality.

In Action

When you first open Fusion 3, you will see a three-paneled interface with a list of font sets on the left, font previews on the top right, and a list of fonts in that set on the bottom right. Suitcase will examine your system and display installed fonts, but it won't list any that are sitting in folders, uninstalled. (We wish it offered that option.) If you don't see all your fonts, you can help Suitcase find them. To import fonts, select File, then Add Fonts, and navigate to your



folders containing fonts. Optionally, you can create font sets first (an option also on the File menu) and then add fonts directly into those sets.

Sets are the core of Suitcase and have been since its inception. The idea is that you can group fonts into sets by criteria, such as project; client; employee; even application, and only access (activate) the ones you need at the time. Not having every font on your system activated at once saves system resources and helps avoid making inappropriate choices. Suitcase can even activate and deactivate system fonts (those installed at the Windows level), provided they are not required for system operation, and they will appear and disappear as desired in your programs.

To create Application Sets, you'll have to navigate Suitcase to the executable file of the application, so you need to be familiar with finding program files (usually an EXE file in your Program Files or similar folder). Suitcase also has plug-ins for creative programs such as InDesign (www.adobe.com), Illustrator,

Key Features: Suitcase Fusion integrates with many creative programs to provide comprehensive font management, including side-by-side comparisons and printable views.

and QuarkXpress (8.quark.com) that can automatically activate and deactivate the fonts in your document (and its objects and links).

More Goodies

Font sets are far from being Fusion 3's only trick. With it, you can preview how fonts will look on the Web, find fonts that match certain criteria (type, name, date installed, etc.), temporarily activate fonts you don't plan to keep on your system long, collect document fonts to send to a printer, and more. The one-year subscription to WebINK (which offers fonts for Web sites) is a real bonus for those who tinker with company or personal Web sites. ■

BY JENNIFER FARWELL

Nero 10 Multimedia Suite Platinum HD

\$99.99 | Nero
(818) 956-7551 | www.nero.com

Media Editing & Management



For years, Nero has been a solid media burning tool with a mixed palette of additional features. With the release of Nero 10, the suite has become so all-encompassing it's hard to imagine anyone (other than video professionals) needing more. The suite includes 13 programs and applets, all of which you can access directly from your Start menu (in All Programs) or through StartSmart, its command center. (Nero's Control Center is for updates and other system-level functions, not for program access.)

One star of the suite is Nero Vision, a user-friendly video editor with a quick-select menu so you can get right

Key Features: The Platinum version of Nero 10 Multimedia Suite includes Blu-ray playback, media transfer to mobile devices, and creative effects packages.

to work capturing video or making a movie. The rest of the interface is just as easy to navigate, whether you are adding effects or working with keyframes.

Other tools handle everything from data backup to media burning and ripping to other formats. Nero MediaHub lets you organize, create slideshows, perform some basic edits, and play your files.

The Platinum version of Nero Multimedia Suite 10 doesn't offer a free trial, but the standard version does. Give it a spin. Whether you are making training videos for work or commemorating your daughter's birthday party, we think you'll like it. ■

BY JENNIFER FARWELL

ReplyButler Boilerplate Email Text

\$99.95 | ITSTH
support@itsth.com | www.replybutler.com



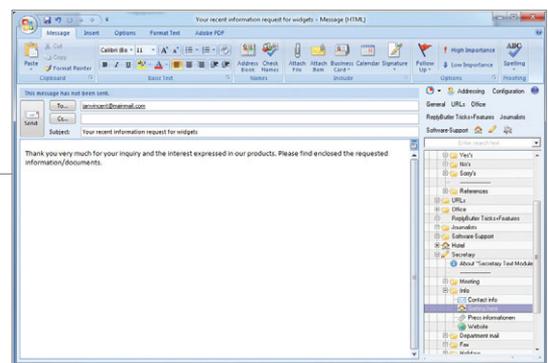
If you've ever wished you had some means of expediting repetitive email messages (other than finding ones you've already sent and replicating them), ReplyButler is ready to help. The email client (Outlook only) applet provides basic snippets of industry-specific (Office, Webshop, etc.) text you can drop into your emails with a couple of clicks.

After the installation, ReplyButler places a pane on the right side of your Outlook display (you can move it), giving you access to its features. In addition to offering snippets on demand, ReplyButler can automatically enter greeting text when you reply to an email and prompt you to attach a file if you mention the file in an email.

Key Features: ReplyButler accelerates email productivity in Microsoft Outlook with boilerplate texts, both built-in and user-generated.

The business edition we trialed can automatically move emails to another folder of your choice after you answer them. It also has a mail scheduling feature, letting you schedule the sending of a message at a future time. Most importantly, it lets you create your own boilerplate text, including salutations (Dear Mr. Smith), from text you key, select, or copy to the Windows Clipboard.

If you frequently send emails with chunks of the same text, ReplyButler



can be handy. You'll save a few bucks with the Home Edition, but you will lose the business perks, including the ability to create custom text modules. There is also a limited, ad-supported, freeware version. ■

BY JENNIFER FARWELL

Microsoft News

Hotmail Introduces Email Aliases

A new feature in Hotmail lets users set up and manage multiple secondary email addresses, also known as aliases, from within a single Hotmail account. Aliases are unique and expendable email addresses you can use to receive or send mail for specialized purposes (such as marketing lists, job hunting, or online shopping) when you don't want to divulge your primary email address.

Hotmail users can now create up to five aliases per year and up to 15 aliases total.

Microsoft Releases Survey On Location-Based Services

In connection with Digital Privacy Day 2011, held on Jan. 28, Microsoft released the results of a survey it commissioned regarding consumer awareness and use of LBS (location-based services). The survey questioned 1,500 people in the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, and the UK and found that while 51% of respondents had used LBS before and 94% of those users had found it "valuable," more than 80% were concerned about the loss of privacy and potential for data and/or identity theft when sharing their locations.

An account lockout can help thwart those who walk up to your computer and try to guess the password.

More of Microsoft's survey findings, as well as some tips on how to mitigate the privacy risks of LBS, are available at www.microsoft.com/privacy/dpd.

Windows Tips

Set Up A Temporary Windows Account Lockout

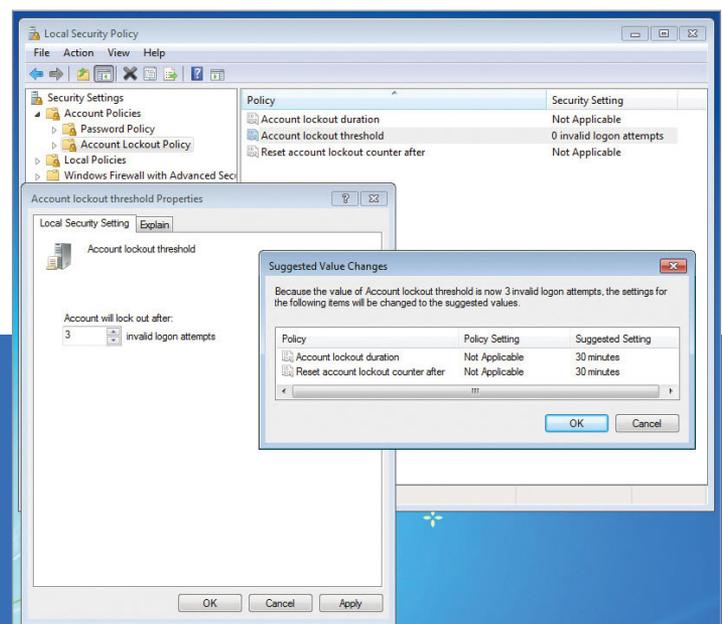
If you frequently leave your computer unattended and are concerned about passers-by potentially gaining access by repeatedly trying to guess your password, you can get a little extra peace of mind by configuring your system to temporarily lock your account after a certain number of incorrect password entries.

To set this up on a Win7 or Vista system with the Professional/Business or Ultimate versions of the OS, make sure you're logged in with an administrative account. Click Start and type **local** in the Search box. Select Local Security Policy from the Start

menu. Now double-click Account Policies, Account Lockout Policy, and Account Lockout Threshold. Specify the number of invalid logon attempts you want before triggering a lock—3 or 5 are reasonable choices—and click Apply and OK.

Next, a window will appear indicating that the two related settings—Account Lockout Duration and Reset Account Lockout Counter After—will each be changed to the suggested value of 30 minutes. You can change either setting afterward if you choose. (The lockout counter setting refers to how long the system will remember an incorrect password and count it against the threshold.)

You can also set up account lockout on a Win7/Vista Home Premium, Basic, or Starter system, but the procedure is different because those versions lack the Group Policy Editor. On any of these Windows versions, type **command** in the



Start menu's Search box, right-click Command Prompt, and then select Run As Administrator. In the Command Prompt window, type **net accounts /lockoutthreshold:x** (where "x" is the number of bad attempts you want to trigger the lockout). The account lockout duration and reset counter time are automatically set to 30 minutes for you, though here the latter setting is actually called Lockout Observation Window. To change these settings, type **net accounts /lockoutduration:x** and **net accounts /lockoutwindow :x** where "x" is the number of minutes. (NOTE: You need to change the lockout window before you can change the duration.) To see the settings without making any changes, simply type **net accounts** and to disable account lockout, type **net accounts /lockoutthreshold:0**.

Take care when using the account lockout setting, because if you mistakenly mis-type your password a few times, you could inadvertently lock yourself out of an account, albeit temporarily.

Hide The Microsoft Office Ribbon

Although it takes some getting used to for longtime Office 2003 users, the Ribbon interface in Office 2007/2010 does help keep the program's myriad features within easy reach. The flip side is that the Ribbon takes up a fairly large amount of space, which can be a problem when you're work-ing on a document on a relatively small screen.

To temporarily reclaim some space for your document, you can hide the Ribbon by double-clicking the currently selected menu tab or by pressing CTRL-F1. ■



Nokia released this image showing what some of the company's future Windows Phone 7-based devices might look like.

Windows News

Nokia To Adopt Windows Phone 7

Microsoft and Nokia have announced a partnership that will make Windows Phone 7 the "principal operating system" on future Nokia smartphones. Under terms of the agreement, Nokia will also collaborate with Microsoft on future Windows Phone 7 development and merge its own Ovi content and application store with Microsoft's Windows Phone 7 Marketplace.

Windows Phone

The two companies plan to build a new mobile "ecosystem" that they hope will rival that of Google's Android and Apple's iPhone. The alliance also likely marks the beginning of the end for Symbian, Nokia's current OS, though there's no indication of exactly when Nokia's first Windows Phone 7-based devices will hit the market.

Windows 7 Service Pack Released

Service Pack 1 for Windows 7 (and Windows Server 2008 R2) is now available for download via Windows Update or at tinyurl.com/36prwj1. SP1 doesn't bring any major new features to Win7, though it includes previously released updates along with a few new fixes related to HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) audio devices and XPS document printing problems.



Microsoft Distributes Windows Autorun Update

Microsoft recently distributed a patch (KB967940) for Windows Vista and WinXP systems via Windows Update that disables the Autorun feature for USB-based flash memory and hard drives. The move aims to thwart the spread of certain kinds of malware that automatically execute when an infected storage device is inserted, such as the notorious Conficker worm that took advantage of Autorun to spread around the globe in late 2008 and early 2009.

The Autorun update doesn't apply to Win7, which disables Autorun by default. A Microsoft Fix It is available at support.microsoft.com/kb/967715 that can automatically enable or disable Autorun on any Windows system.

DIY Project:

Printer Maintenance



The Epson WorkForce 635 is very representative of the \$200 all-in-one inkjet market for small/home offices, offering many impressive features. But like any printer, it still requires regular maintenance.

At one time, the photorealistic quality and outstanding convenience of modern inkjet printers couldn't have been imagined at today's prices. Now, you'll pay less than \$200 for a unit such as HP's Officejet 6500A Plus or Epson's WorkForce 635, able to tackle the duplexing, faxing, scanning, and copying needs of a small/home office. It sounds crazy, but it's true.

Still, there's no such thing as a free lunch. Consumable costs (paper and ink) are the necessary evil of inkjet printers. Printer problems can cause unnecessary consumption, and glitches can also cause users to lose productivity. Although problems can't be entirely avoided, they can be significantly minimized through proper maintenance.

You could take your printer to an authorized repair center for maintenance, but many shops won't even put a printer on their benches for less than \$50. You might spend more money on an annual maintenance contract than the cost of replacing the printer.

Fortunately, most inkjet maintenance is so simple that you can easily accomplish it on your own with a little time and patience. We'll use the Epson WorkForce 635 as an example and cover several DIY maintenance essentials to help keep your costs down.

Cartridge Care

Clear the nozzles. On occasion, printouts may become too light.

Alternatively, dark or light bands may appear across printed images or text. If this happens, you may need to clean the print head nozzles. Print head electronics can either be part of the printer or, more commonly, built into the print cartridge. Either way, the ink cartridge uses a reservoir containing a sponge and a certain color of ink. The reservoir feeds into the cartridge's outlet nozzle. Most printer ink is petroleum-based, and if it sits too long in the nozzle or sits motionless on the plate above the nozzle, it can turn sludgy and clog the nozzle.

Fortunately, most modern printers, including the WorkForce 635, include an easy way to do this right from the front control panel. (Note that the steps



Each cartridge can hold a few milliliters of ink, and most cartridges can be refilled either by local servicers or by DIY refill kits. Just be sure that your refills are using reputable, guaranteed inks.

and menu options may vary a little depending on your specific printer.) For the WorkForce 635, maintenance options begin with a Nozzle Check. This prints a test pattern. Gaps in the pattern's diagonal lines are generally a good telltale of clogged nozzles. At this point, run the printer's Head Cleaning routine. Very often, this will solve the problem, although a total fix may require several successive cleanings. Keep in mind that ink is consumed with each such cleaning. (While you're in these front

panel settings, run a Head Alignment, as well. This can help with banding and color shifting.)

Power down. In addition to saving electricity, some experts believe that powering down the printer when it's not in use will help extend cartridge life and prevent clogged print heads. This is because leaving the power on keeps the ink warm, allowing it to more easily leech into the print head.

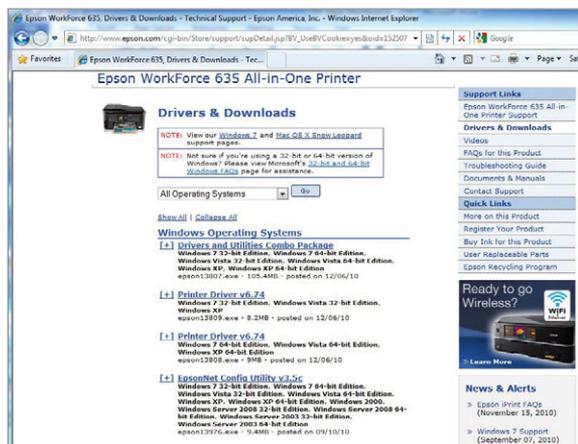
Remove cartridges when storing the printer.

When you're going to have the printer offline for weeks or more at a time, remove the cartridges and keep the nozzles in an airtight container. Some manufacturers ship their cartridges with special caps for this purpose, but even a plastic zipper storage bag should suffice.

Consider refills. The debate over whether users should use third-party inkjet cartridges and/or refilled cartridges is never-ending. Especially in a DIY-oriented article, we would be remiss not to point out that third-party refilling can be more economical than throwing out old cartridges and replacing them with new factory units.

That said, not all third-party inks are created equal. The best are practically indistinguishable from factory inks, especially for everyday, nonarchival uses. With bargain basement brands, though, you're playing Russian roulette.

Epson's official stance on nonfactory cartridges is this: "Using these products will not void the product's original warranty; however, if these third-party products cause a failure,



Epson maintains a full, regularly updated, and freely downloadable array of drivers and utilities for printer owners.

the repair of that failure will not be covered under warranty."

General Tips

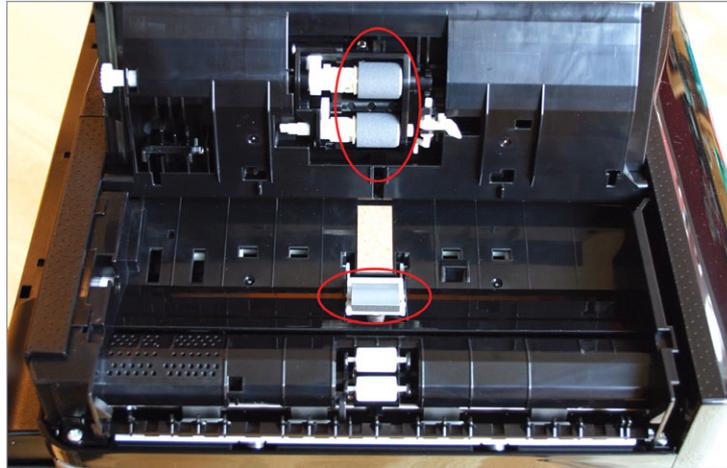
Keep it clean. Dust and dirt are two of any printer's top enemies. Clumped onto a pickup roller, they can prevent paper from feeding, or they can clog ink cartridge nozzles and prevent proper print output. The best offense here is a good defense. Keep your printer in a cool, relatively dry, and largely dust-free environment. When you see dust accumulate on the printer, wipe it away with a dust cloth. Also be sure to open the printer's various doors and wipe out whatever inside spaces can be reached. For more secluded components, blow out dust with a can of compressed air, being sure to keep the nozzle or end of the blowing straw at least 6 inches away from any surface.



Here, you can see the output nozzle on one of Epson's ink cartridges. When improperly maintained, these nozzles can become blocked by gummy ink sludge.

One of the “clingiest” components is likely to be the rubber rollers. You’ll find these at various places through which paper feeds, including the rear straight paper path and the side area used by the automatic document feeder. You should be able to see if debris has become stuck to the rollers. If so, use a moist cloth to wipe away the material; use a dab of rubbing alcohol if necessary.

Keep it current. Occasionally check for driver updates to ensure your product is compatible with any changes made to current operating systems and technologies. Keeping drivers up-to-date can also help improve the performance of your printer. Every so often, printer vendors find ways to have their machines operate more efficiently or deliver higher quality. These improvements can be enabled through the drivers, so if your printer’s software



Pickup rollers, which help move paper through the printer, can become coated with debris and cause potentially harmful jams. A damp cotton swab or cloth can clean these rollers.

doesn’t automatically check for updates, be sure to visit the manufacturer’s support site every few months, download any new driver releases (final, not beta), and install them.

Watch your paper. We mentioned earlier that debris accumulation on rollers could affect printer performance. This is also true of the paper’s condition within the input tray. Excessive

lead to jams and cause excessive wear or damage on components. Similarly, if the guides are too narrow, it can cause paper to bow upward, also causing misfeeds. Adjust the guides so they just touch the edge of the paper stack but are not pressed too snugly against it. ■

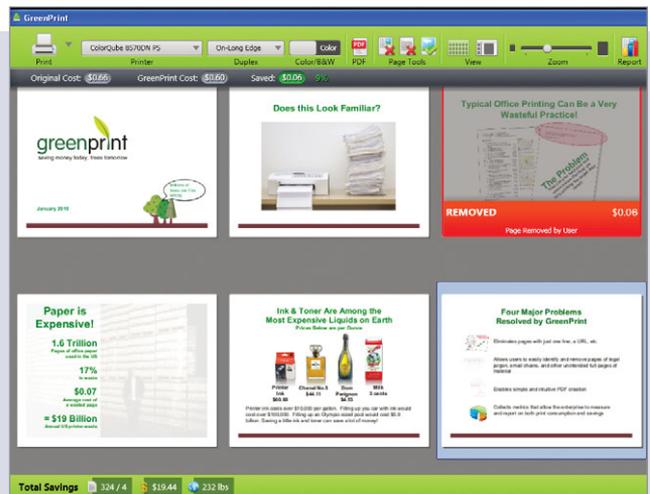
BY WILLIAM VAN WINKLE

Save Greenbacks With GreenPrint

One of the best ways to lighten the wear and tear on your printer—not to mention save trees and money—is to print fewer pages. In the real world, most users won’t spend the valuable minutes to cut and paste only the content they want into a new document, nor will they do a print preview to identify the pages they don’t need. An application called GreenPrint (www.printgreener.com) aims to quietly place itself between your Print command and the final output.

GreenPrint starts by running the Print Preview command for you automatically, displaying thumbnail tiles for each page. You can select tiles individually or in batches, electing to cut pages from the job, turn them from color to grayscale (because black ink is much cheaper than color), or omit any graphics—a handy exclusion when you’re faced with paying for printing someone’s banner ads. Alternatively, if you decide you really don’t need a physical copy, GreenPrint gives you one-touch export into PDF (Portable Document Format).

According to GreenPrint, the app helps cut paper output by 17 to 25% and cuts roughly \$90 annually in paper and ink costs per user. If you want proof, the app includes a reporting section that shows the number of pages saved vs.



GreenPrint software revolutionizes home and office printing by eliminating wasteful pages before they’re printed.

pages printed per printer and application, as well as the amount of money saved, among other things. A free Windows version for home users is ad-subsidized. For \$19 per PC, home and small businesses can eliminate the advertising. Volume licenses are available for enterprises.

Adobe Acrobat X Pro

Time To Take Action

Quick Studies
How-To

Document
Management

Beginner

Adobe Acrobat X has many new features, and one that we really like is the Action Wizard. This little gem helps you delegate repetitive tasks to your computer so that all you have to do is click a button.

Take The Shortcut

The Action Wizard can be useful for small tasks that you do frequently. It's also great when you are sending instructions to another user and want to make sure he is able to perform the task consistently. If you want to train an employee (who works in a different office) on how to create a certain type of report, you could send him an email containing the Action Wizard for creating that report. The necessary steps could be set in motion by simply starting the Action Wizard without any additional help from the person doing the training.

To begin, open Adobe Acrobat X and click File, Action Wizard, and Create New Action. In the Create New Action dialog box, you'll

There is no limit to the number of actions you can add to your Wizard.

matches many of the ones in the Tools panel in Acrobat. There is no limit to the number of actions you can add to your Wizard. As an example, click the Pages section and click Header & Footer (Remove). You'll see this appear in the Steps section in the main area of the dialog box. Now, click Watermark (Add). To dictate what type of watermark it should be, click the Options icon in the Watermark step to open the accompanying dialog box. In the Text field of the Source section, type FINAL and click OK.

Control The Content

Click the Content menu item to add a step that allows the end user to control the content. You can even add instructions for carrying out these content changes. If you want to change the order of the Action Wizard steps at any time, just click the step and move it where you want it.

The Save To drop-down box is important because it lets you decide where the new version of the document will be saved once the Action Wizard has completed its changes. If you want to overwrite the original file with the new, leave that checkbox clicked. The Output Options icon opens a dialog box where you can set up the naming conventions for the adjusted file, including the automatic addition of a suffix to the new file.

Run The Action

Once the steps are established, click Save and give the Action a name and description. To run it immediately, click the Run This Action After Saving checkbox. To work more with an Action Wizard once created, choose Action Wizard from the File menu and select the Action you want. You can also choose Edit Actions to edit, delete, import, export, copy, rename, and run the Action. |



Creating an Action Wizard lets you automate and delegate tasks with ease.

need to choose a starting point for the action from the Start With drop-down menu. Think about when the action you're creating usually begins: Does the action apply to a file on your computer, a scanned document, or a file in Adobe? If you choose Ask When Action Is Started, you can start the action from any type of document.

Now, you're ready to add the steps to the action. On the left side, there is a panel of categories that

BY JENNIE SCHLUETER

Build A SOHO PC

Part II: Assemble The System

This is the second article in a three-part series that will show you how to buy, build, and configure a PC designed for small or home office use. Last month, we selected the components for our new system. This month, we'll show you how to put together and install all of the parts. Next month, we'll wrap things up by walking you through installing and configuring Windows.

Where To Start

Building the computer may seem like the most intimidating part of the entire process, but nearly every component comes with a detailed manual that will tell you how to install the part, so start by rounding up your manuals and a few tools. Although much of the Corsair Graphite Series 600T case has a mostly tool-less design, you'll need some standard tools for certain steps. Grab Phillips and flat tip screwdrivers as well as



isopropyl alcohol and a lint-free cloth

to clean off the area where the CPU (also known as a processor) and CPU cooler connect. We like to use coffee filters, because they are lint free, affordable, and disposable. Your new processor cooler (also known as a heatsink) likely has a thermal pad or includes a tube of thermal paste, but if it doesn't, pick up a tube of thermal

Routing your cables through holes in the motherboard tray will improve airflow and make everything look neater.



paste at your local electronics store or an online retailer.

It may seem logical to start by installing the motherboard, as all of the components will connect to it, but we find that your computer will have a cleaner interior if you begin by finding and routing the computer's cables. Take the side panels off both sides of the case and pull out the cables that run from the case's front panel. For example, the Corsair Graphite Series 600T features two USB 2.0 internal connectors, a USB

3.0 connector, a FireWire connector, and the front-panel connectors (which include the Power switch, power LED [light-emitting diode], hard drive LED, and reset switch). Set the motherboard onto the case's motherboard mounting screws

to give yourself a good idea of where all the cables need to run. (NOTE: Mounting screws are the tiny screws that attach to the case's motherboard tray and allow you to secure the motherboard to the tray such that it doesn't touch the tray.)

Then, run the cables behind the motherboard tray and through the rubber grommets in the tray, so that one end re-enters the case near the motherboard, and the other end re-enters near the section that will hold the related device (such as the hard drive or optical drive). Once you have routed the cables, remove the motherboard.

Install The Storage Devices

In our system, the storage devices include a Lite-On 24X Internal DVD Writer iHAS424 and a Crucial 128GB RealSSD C300 SSD (solid-state drive).

With the 600T Series case's tool-less drive bays, installing the optical drive consisted of removing the plastic panel on the front chassis (by pressing its two clips) and pushing the optical drive into the slot. Once we slid the drive in, the plastic locks inside the optical drive bay locked it in place. To install the 2.5-inch Crucial RealSSD C300, we pulled out one of



The hard drive cage houses hard drives and SSDs. As you can see, SSDs are much smaller than standard hard drives; this hard drive tray has more than enough space.

the removable drive cradles and used flat head screws, (included with the case) to lock the SSD into the cradle.

If we had used a traditional 3.5-inch hard drive, there are four pins on the sides of the cradle that would have let us simply slide the hard drive into the pins. If you find yourself working with a case that doesn't have tool-less drive bays, you can slide the drive into the cage until the screw openings on the drive match up with the openings on the side of the cage. Then, insert the screws that were included with the case (or with the drive).

Add The Power Supply

Next, we installed the power supply so that we could easily route the power cables. We positioned the OCZ 500W StealthXStream 2 so that the fan faced the vent at the bottom of the case. This allows the fan to pull fresh air through the vent at the bottom of the case. The PSU then exhausts warm air behind the computer.



Install the power supply into the section of the case that has a rectangular opening.

power supply

We screwed the power supply into the case. Next, we placed the motherboard back onto the motherboard tray (but didn't attach it with screws, yet). We pulled the power cords through the holes in the tray and positioned them close to where they would need to connect to the motherboard, components, and fans. For example, we ran SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Extended) power cables (thin, flat

connectors) behind the drive cages to the optical drive and the hard drive. Other necessary power connectors included the 20+4 pin main power cable and the smaller 12V (volt) power cable. Our graphics card didn't require its own PCI-E (Peripheral Component Interconnect Express) power cable, but some video cards do. Check the manual for your graphics card to determine which (if any) power cables you need.

Attach The CPU & Cooler

Because many CPU coolers now require you to attach a back plate to the flip side of the motherboard, it's often a good idea to install the CPU and the CPU cooler before you mount the motherboard to the motherboard tray. The reason is that the back plate can only be attached to the back side of the motherboard, which typically isn't accessible after you mount the motherboard. That said, the Graphite Series 600T case features a cut-out opening in the motherboard tray, so it's easy to install and remove CPU coolers, even when the motherboard is attached to the case.

We started the CPU installation by removing the plastic cover from the processor socket. We lifted the latch that locks the plastic cover in place and removed the cover. Then, we took the processor out of its box, holding it by the sides of the printed circuit board. With newer Intel chips, such as the Intel Core i5-655K in our build, there are two notches in the printed circuit board. We matched them up with the alignment keys in the CPU socket as we gently put the CPU in

Here, you can see the processor sitting inside the CPU socket and covered with a thin layer of thermal paste.

processor



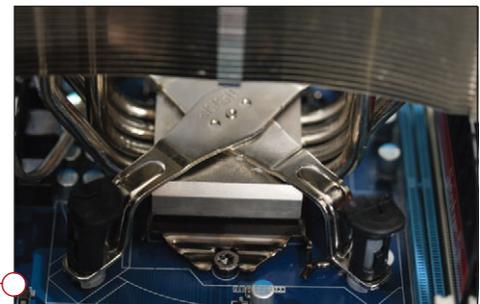
place. Next, we closed and locked the latch so that the processor was secure. (NOTE: AMD [www.amd.com] CPUs usually feature a gold or white triangle in one corner of the circuit board, which you will match up with the gold or white triangle on the CPU socket.)

Next, we prepared the CPU cooler. In our case, the cooler already had a thermal pad, which is a small pad that transfers heat from the top of the processor to the cooler. We cleaned the top of the processor with isopropyl alcohol and dried it with a coffee filter, then waited a few minutes to ensure that the surface was dry. (NOTE: If your cooler doesn't have a thermal pad, you'll need to clean the cooler with the isopropyl alcohol, let it dry, and then apply a thin layer of thermal paste to the top of the processor.)

Finally, we placed the cooler on the processor and secured it to the motherboard. Depending on the type of CPU cooler you have, the way you lock the cooler onto the motherboard will differ. For example, many AMD-based CPU coolers feature a retaining clip on both sides that fit into slots in the motherboard. Align the two clips into the slots and pull the lever on the CPU to lock it in place. With a CPU cooler that attaches to the back plate, you'll

The CPU cooler fits on top of the processor and locks into the motherboard.

CPU cooler



need to find the bracket that matches the type of CPU you're using, such as LGA 1156. Start by fastening the bracket to the CPU cooler. Then, place the back plate (again, matching the type of CPU you use) to the back of the motherboard and attach any anti-vibration pads. Lower the bracket's screws into the holes in the motherboard and back plate. Place the nuts onto the screws and turn them to tighten the cooler onto the surface of the CPU.

Mount The Motherboard

At this point, we had routed the cables and installed the CPU cooler, so it was just about time to screw the motherboard to the mounting screws

on the motherboard tray. First, we took the input/output faceplate from the motherboard box and installed it in the opening at the back of the case.

Finally, we attached the motherboard. Typically, only a few mounting screws are already on the motherboard tray in the case, but the manufacturer includes extra mounting screws that you can add where necessary. We aligned the motherboard over the existing mounts to give us an idea of the spots that needed additional mounting screws. We were careful to avoid over-tightening the screws, as that can damage the board.

Attach The Cables

When connecting the power and input cables, it's best to have the motherboard manual nearby, because the manual will show you where all of the connectors are located. We started by connecting the 12V power cable and the ATX (Advanced Technology

Extended) power cable (the large 20+4-pin connector). These power cables are the thickest and can be tricky to maneuver inside the case, so it's a good idea to get them in place first. Next, we connected the power cables

manual, noting the orientation of the positive and negative connections.

If you opted for a motherboard with a 6Gbps (gigabits per second) SATA port (also called SATA 3.0), you'll want to ensure that the hard drive connects to the 6Gbps port, because the hard drive is one of the few components that can take advantage of extra speed. We connected the Crucial 128GB RealSSD C300 to one of the two 6Gbps SATA ports on the Gigabyte GA-P55A-UD3 motherboard. Optical drives, memory card readers, and other storage devices typically won't benefit from 6Gbps SATA, so we connected them to the 3Gbps SATA ports (also called SATA



Here is an interior shot of the completed system. The routing of cables behind the motherboard tray allows for clear access to the internal parts.

final product

for the components, such as SATA power cables for the optical drive and hard drive, as well as cables for the case fans and CPU cooler fan.

With the power cables in place, we connected the input/output cables, such as the power switch, front-panel USB, and front-panel audio connectors. When working on your own system, pay close attention to the front panel header, which is where the power, reset, and front-panel jacks connect to the motherboard. Note that although many motherboard vendors color-code the front-panel header, the colors don't always match up with the colors of the cables on the case. To ensure everything is correctly connected, review the pin assignments in the motherboard

2.0). For convenient audio connectivity, most cases include front-panel audio connectors for both HD and AC'97 audio, but you can only connect one of the connectors. Nearly all of today's motherboards support HD audio, so feel free to connect the HD audio cable.

Install Remaining Hardware

In our setup, the system memory and the MSI R5570-MD1G graphics card were the only components left to install, but other popular add-in card



The graphics card slides into the motherboard's PCI-E x16 slot. Some motherboards have built-in graphics capabilities.

graphics card & motherboard



wireless keyboard and mouse

A wireless keyboard and mouse combo, such as Microsoft's Wireless Comfort Desktop 5000, gives your office a clutter-free, polished appearance.

Studio at this point, as we'll need our PC to run Windows before we can take advantage of the camera.

Finally, we plugged the power cable into the back of the power supply (and plugged the other end into our surge protector, along with the monitor's power cable). Then we powered on the system to see if everything was up and running, such as fans and video output to the monitor. The system turned on without trouble and let us enter the BIOS (Basic Input /Output System). The computer recognized the mouse and keyboard right away. All that was left to do was to install Windows. We'll tell you how that goes next month, in the final segment of this series. ■

BY NATHAN LAKE

options for your system include an 802.11n Wi-Fi card, a dedicated sound card (which would replace your motherboard's built-in sound processor), or extra USB connections. When installing an add-in card—whether it be a graphics card, sound card, or other—you can follow a similar set of guidelines. First, you'll need to locate the slot on the motherboard that supports the add-in card. Next, align the card over the slot and press down until it's securely seated. Then, screw the metal bracket to the case's rear panel. With a graphics card, you may also need to connect a special 6-pin and/or 8-pin power connector.

To install the memory, we opened the motherboard manual and flipped to the section that covers memory. The manual will indicate which slot or slots you should install the memory into, depending on how many modules you have. In our system, the Gigabyte GA-P55A-UD3 motherboard required us to install the two 2GB Patriot Viper II Sector 5 Series modules into the slots labeled "1" and "3." A second set of modules could go into the slots labeled "2" and "4."

Most motherboards offer four slots, but you'll want to match up the modules with the board's dual-channel configuration, which is a setup where the computer can communicate with both modules at the same time.

Finishing Touches

Once we finished installing the computer's internal components, we turned our attention to its exterior

accessories and parts. We connected the Asus VH196T-P monitor and the Microsoft Wireless Comfort Desktop 5000 keyboard and mouse. We installed the included AA batteries into the mouse and keyboard and then inserted the wireless transceiver into one of the USB ports on our system. We didn't install our Microsoft LifeCam

Our SOHO PC

We balanced price and performance to build an affordable system that can handle office programs and tasks now and down the road.

PARTS LIST	MANUFACTURER & MODEL	PRICE	WEB SITE
Processor	Intel Core i5-655K	\$216	www.intel.com
Motherboard	Gigabyte GA-P55A-UD3	\$139.99	www.gigabyte.com
Memory	Patriot 4GB Viper II Sector 5 Series	\$74.99	www.patriotmem.com
Hard Drive	Crucial 128GB RealSSD C300	\$249.99	www.crucial.com
Graphics Card	MSI R5570-MD1G	\$94.99	www.msi.com
Power Supply	OCZ 500W StealthXStream 2	\$59.99	www.ocz.com
Case	Corsair Graphite Series 600T	\$159.99	www.corsair.com
Optical Drive	Lite-On iHAS424 24X Internal DVD Writer with Label DTag	\$22.99	www.liteonit.com
Mouse & Keyboard	Microsoft Wireless Comfort Desktop 5000	\$79.95	www.microsoft.com
Monitor	Asus VH196T-P	\$114.99	www.asus.com
Web cam	Microsoft LifeCam Studio	\$99.95	www.microsoft.com
	Total Price	\$1,313.82	

Create A Video Product Release

The Right Audience & The Right Tools

The Internet is a powerful tool for disseminating information, and you're a savvy-enough SOHO (small and home office) user to know that releasing a product with a video on your business' YouTube channel (www.youtube.com) is a great way to get out the word about your latest product. Here are some pointers for creating a video product release that will get attention.

Know Your Audience

When you're making a product release video, do so with a specific audience in mind. For example, are you making a video designed to appeal to consumers? To journalists? To your business partners? To potential investors? Depending on whom the video is for, you'll find yourself making different decisions at various points throughout the creation process.

Further, you should decide whether you want the video to stand on its own as an informative piece that gives the viewer all the specifications, pricing information, and other detailed information, or if you want it to simply generate buzz and direct viewers to your store or Web site.



Publishing a product release video through your company's YouTube channel is a great way to get the word out.

Type Of Distribution

In addition to knowing your intended audience, consider how you want to distribute your video, which will also affect what you create.

For example, if you're planning to make a video that you hope to distribute virally, you're likely to post it to your company Facebook page or

circulate links to certain individuals. A viral video should be relatively short, catchy, and should be in a mobile-friendly format.

However, if you prefer to distribute this video through more conventional news media channels, you can take a different approach in creating it. The decisions you make regarding distribution will affect the length and overall tone of the video, and how much or how little information you include.

Basic Tips

Whoever your audience is and however you intend to distribute the video, there are a few presentation tips to keep in mind.

You need to tell a story with this video. Inform the viewer about why your product exists, how it's better than competing products, and any unique problem your product solves. It's not enough to simply say that you have a new product; you need to make the viewer care about it and want it.

As with any presentation or story, you need a compelling introduction—if you can draw in the viewers with a catchy or compelling lead-in, they'll stick around and watch the rest of the video.

The introduction should also communicate who you are and what the product is—but do so quickly and efficiently. Nobody wants to sit through 10 to 15 seconds of titles before the interesting part of the video begins.

The body of the video should be at least somewhat informative, even if it's just a short 15 to 30 second advertisement. It should reinforce whatever you teased or promised in the introduction.

A viral video should be relatively short, catchy, and should be in a mobile-friendly format.



CyberLink PowerDirector 9 is video-editing software you can use to create your video.

The video should have a compelling conclusion, as well. Depending on the type of video you're making, you may summarize the information presented in the body; send the viewer to your Web site, Facebook page, or store; or do anything else that gives him a reason to remember your product, do additional research, or tell his friends about it.

It's good to be funny (but not silly) and clever (but not obscure). And it's not wise to "shout" at the viewer (excessively loud music or voice work, jittery flashing lights or scenes, for example), unless that's a specific ironic aesthetic ploy you're using.

Elements you may want to work into your video include appropriate background music, titles and subtitles to break the piece into digestible sections, interviews with product experts or users, helpful charts or graphics, and product demonstrations.

Regarding the length of the video, consider the differences among, for example, a short, 15 to 30 second video; one that's between about one and five minutes long; and a longer video that lasts 10 minutes or more. Each length gives you different oppor-

tunities for presenting content. Shorter formats are better for viral videos—nobody wants to click a link from a buddy and sit through a seven-minute informative video—while longer formats offer the opportunity to get into greater detail, which is great for journalists and consumers doing research on a product before they buy. Keep in mind that YouTube won't accept videos longer than 15 minutes.

One option, if you have a lot of information you want to get across, is to break a video up into multiple parts as separate videos. By offering, say, parts I, II, and III, users can watch only the clips they need to.

The Right Tools For The Job

Assuming you're not paying a professional outfit to film your video for you, you'll need a digital camcorder capable of shooting in HD (high definition; you can always create a lower-resolution version of what you shoot

and file format; and add any titles, subtitles, transitions, and visual effects that you wish to include.

CyberLink's PowerDirector 9 (\$94.95 for Ultra64, \$69.95 for the Deluxe version; www.cyberlink.com), for example, is powerful video-editing software that has all the features you need to make an attractive video.

The editing tools offer plenty of workspace for multiple tracks, advanced adjustment features, Wave-Editor for editing audio, and full HD previews. It also has a plethora of video effects, wizards to create movies or slideshows from templates, and tools for easily sharing your creations on YouTube and Facebook.

In terms of performance, PowerDirector 9's TrueVelocity Engine is designed to take full advantage of 64-bit operating systems and your computer's hardware to process and render video, even on the fly.

Your PR efforts are a reflection of your company; if you put out poorly produced materials, it taints your



CyberLink PowerDirector 9 offers plenty of editing options.

during editing) with a good microphone to capture quality audio. You'll also need video-editing software to edit the video; add music and other audio effects if desired; render the video at the appropriate resolution

corporate image. Leave room in the budget to buy the right tools for the job and tailor your product release video to the right audience. ■

BY SETH COLANER

BUSINESS TECH

How To Handle Bad Reviews

Local online communities and social networking sites are wonderful tools for reaching out to new customers and engaging your base. They can provide magnificent forums for satisfied and loyal customers to share their enthusiasm and provide the kind of marketing credibility that money can't buy.

What happens when not-so-satisfied or not-so-loyal customers turn your viral marketing dreams into a nightmare? What about when "the crowd" is wrong or misinformed? What if one or two unrepresentative people with bad information (or bad intentions) skew everyone else's overall perception? What if someone had a bad experience, but you've really made changes since? It's easy to forget that online reviews can cover the bad and the ugly as well as the good. We'll help you combat negative feedback online, both generally and in several tools commonly used by customers and critics of small businesses.

Do A Gut Check

Start by asking yourself a tough question: "Are they right?" It's easy to get defensive and blame the messenger or slip into denial, especially when criticism is so openly on display. But you need to treat online reviews as seriously as you would face-to-face comments or private feedback from customer satisfaction surveys and response cards. Just because online critiques can be publicly embarrassing doesn't mean they're any less valid.

Take a day before doing anything else and reflect on the roots of a bad

review. Does it expose a real flaw in your business that needs correcting? Is there something you could or should be doing differently to manage customers' perceptions? Even if a review seems unfair or inaccurate originally, put yourself in the reviewer's shoes and think of all the possible ways in which someone might legitimately see things differently. Try to take the most charitable or positive view of the reviewer's position. You will often see things you might otherwise miss.

Separate the factual content and source of dissatisfaction from the way the message was presented. Some reviewers use inflammatory rhetoric, but that doesn't mean they're wrong. Even rude and poorly written reviews can house valuable kernels of truth that you can turn into advice for strengthening your business. Once you identify opportunities for improvement, come up with a plan to get your house in order internally before attending to the review itself.

Keep It Friendly

If you're sure that the review warrants a response, either in an attempt to set the record straight or to explain yourself, first try responding privately and amicably. Keep it short, simple, and polite. Don't make it personal—stick to statements of fact about your business or yourself. Remember that your customers' criticisms are heartfelt, and that they took the time to go out of their ways to post. If you respect that fact, you're more likely to re-earn their respect. Above all, don't say anything privately you wouldn't

What Not To Do

We're all about the positive, but there are still a few warnings to keep in mind.

Don't flame. Personal attacks make you look petty and mean. No one wants to do business with a bully, and engaging in flame wars only serves to reinforce negative perceptions. Unhappy customers don't always fight fair. Joining them on the low road is the path to ruin.

Don't argue. A cantankerous store owner makes for funny television but isn't good business for most of us. Everyone's entitled to their opinions, even if you think they're wrong. You won't win a public argument, even if you're right.

Don't fake it. Padding your reviews with false praise is not only transparent, it's a good way to make a bad situation worse. At the very least, many sites will remove blatantly "cooked" reviews. They may even bar you from participating.

Don't worry too much. Time heals all wounds, and Internet reviews age less gracefully than teenage pop stars. A single bad review shouldn't break your business. Over time, the truth will generally win out. If you're doing the right things, negative feedback will eventually be replaced and fade quietly away.

want shared publicly with all your customers. Even private messages or emails can be reposted or forwarded. Take a cooling-off period before responding, and have someone neutral review your response.

You won't always be able to talk the reviewer into a retraction or revision, and it's better not to lead with that as a topic of conversation or even view it as your main goal. Think of any response primarily as

Sophisticated sites may offer tools for business owners to respond or update their own profiles, and (generally speaking) you can contact a host or moderator for an active Web site. But tread cautiously—no one is likely to do anything about any review unless it's obviously dishonest, blatantly offensive, or inappropriately personal. If you're subjected to such treatment, by all means, try and work with the site owners to address such behavior under

via Yelp for Business Owners (bit.ly/FkzL5). After verifying your identity, you can unlock your business's page and then respond to reviews either publicly or privately. Yelp! also has a few guidelines that help keep things cordial. For one, you have to include a photo of yourself when responding to reviews, which tends to humanize the experience. You're also encouraged to respond privately before responding

Yelp! For Business Owners can help you unlock your business account, manage your company's presence, and interact with reviewing customers.

yelp for Business Owners

Log In To Your Account

Support Center

What is Yelp?
Unlocking A Business Account
Using A Business Account
Responding to Reviews
Common Questions
Advertising on Yelp

Support Center Log In To Your Account »

Using a Business Account
Yelp aims to connect people with great local businesses and Yelp Business Accounts allow businesses to share information with the Yelp Community.

Announce Special Offers
Help drive customers to a business, customize messages, announce special offers, or just show your fans some love.

Message Your Customers
You have a voice, so join the conversation regarding a business; reply to reviews either publicly or privately.

View Business Trends
What's word-of-mouth doing for you? Stats and charts measure the performance of a business page on Yelp.

Recent Activity
The Recent Activity section allows you to monitor activity on Yelp that relates to a particular business.

either a way to apologize and reassure or as a way to correct a factual misunderstanding. Most people aren't likely to "take back" what they said, but many will give you a second chance if they feel like you're reasonable and generally competent. Everyone has bad days, and most of us recognize that no one's perfect.

Site Advice

We'll discuss several common Web sites that invite customer feedback and the tools they offer for responding. However, there are plenty of other ways for customers to weigh in online, from neighborhood message boards to industry-specific blogs.

their own terms of use. Otherwise, your best bet is to wait. The passage of time lessens the impact of negative feedback and introduces the opportunity for positive new feedback to take its place.

Yelp!

With both a Web site and a mobile application focused on local business listings and reviews, Yelp! (www.yelp.com) is a key destination for those seeking others' opinions on nearby businesses. Handling 39 million visits each month for listings in cities from all 50 states and eight countries, Yelp! provides powerful tools to manage your online presence

publicly and Yelp! will remove reviews that violate its Content Guidelines, which ban second-hand information (among other things).

Angie's List

Users post 40,000 reviews each month on service providers from Accountants to Wrought Iron at Angie's List (www.angieslist.com). The site has a screening process in which reviews are scrutinized before they're made available to the public, which can help prevent blatantly false or prejudicial comments from distorting your reputation. You don't have to be a member company to be reviewed, but you may want to consider joining the site via

have been suspended). Access to all of these options can be found at eBay's Seller Information Center and the Resolution Center.

Everyone's A Critic

Online reviews can be a great source of free marketing and real-world testimonials.

Angie's list. companyconnect
for service and health providers

Home How it Works Grow your Business Business Tools Business Tips

See what Angie's List members are saying about your business.
Registration is free and easy:
REGISTER NOW

- What is Angie's List?
- How does my company get on Angie's List?
- How does Angie's List work?
- How can I encourage my customers to submit Angie's List reports on my company or practice?
- Can I monitor what Angie's List members are saying about my company?
- How can I advertise to Angie's List members?
- How does Angie's List attract new members in my area?

◀ The Angie's List Complaint Resolution Process mediates disagreements and can encourage dissatisfied customers to replace negative reviews.

CompanyConnect (company.angieslist.com). It lets you create a profile, respond to reviewers, and take advantage of the site's Complaint Resolution process which, if successfully completed to the satisfaction of both parties, can improve the final grade on a specific review.

simply reply to the existing feedback publicly. (That option is available only once per comment.) Finally, eBay will remove certain feedback on request, but only if it violates the company's feedback policies (including comments from non-paying buyers or those who

But they are not without their pitfalls. If you remain calm and professional, however, you can weather almost any storm. ■

BY GREGORY ANDERSON

eBay

If your business involves buying and selling on eBay (www.ebay.com) in any significant way, you're certainly familiar with the site's feedback feature. You may feel like you're entirely at the mercy of buyers' feedback, but that's not necessarily the case. First, eBay facilitates and encourages direct private communications between buyer and seller to resolve any disputes. With a mutual agreement you can submit a Feedback Revision Request to the buyer. If that doesn't work, you can

My eBay | Sell | Community | Customer Support

Hi, [username]! (Sign out) Bucks You're Invited! Join eBay Bucks.

Search All Categories Search Advanced

CATEGORIES FASHION MOTORS DEALS CLASSIFIEDS eBay Buyer Protection Learn more

Home > Resolution Center

Resolution Center

Resolve a problem

We always encourage our members to communicate with each other when there's a problem with a transaction. If you've already attempted to contact the member but were unable to resolve the problem, you can open a case.

To start the resolution process, please tell us what your problem is:

I bought an item.

- I haven't received it yet.
- I received an item that does not match the seller's description.

I sold an item.

- I haven't received my payment yet.
- I want to cancel a transaction.

[Continue](#) | [My problem is not listed here](#)

Help

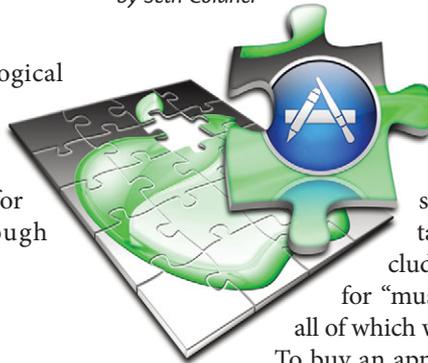
- What to do when a buyer doesn't pay
- Canceling a transaction
- What to do when you don't receive your item or it's not as described
- Resolving buying problems
- Resolving selling problems
- Report a problem with a buyer

▲ eBay's Resolution Center provides tips and tools for working through disputes between buyers and sellers.

The Mac App Store

by Seth Colaner

It was really just a matter of time, a logical next step in the evolution of Apple's move toward more iOS-like features in OS X, but regardless, the Mac App Store is here. This store will be the easiest (and for most people, the primary) means through which one finds and installs applications.



The Layout

Yes, Apple launched a Mac App Store, which is modeled on that extremely popular other App Store (which can be found on iPads, iPods, and iPhones). And although the Mac App Store is redesigned slightly to accommodate the different platform, it feels incredibly familiar. The header has a continuous loop of a few featured applications, and the top of the window has links for Featured, Top Charts, Categories, Purchases, and Updates.

On the main page, there's also a slew of New And Noteworthy apps displayed, as well as Staff Favorites and the familiar Top Paid, Top Free, and Top Grossing lists iOS App Store users are used to.

Using The Mac App Store

Note that you need a system that's updated to Snow Leopard OS X 10.6.6 to acquire the Mac App Store. After you install the Store, it will appear automatically on your Dock. To purchase an item from the Store, all you need is your Apple ID and password, just as you do for the iOS App Store.

To find an app you want, you can either browse or search. If a stroll through the virtual aisles of the Mac App Store appeals to you, you can click Categories at the top of the window and select a category from the next screen. There are many categories to choose from—21 in all—and they range from Games to Productivity to Weather to Photography.

To search, simply enter a query into the in-program Spotlight text field and press ENTER. If there's a specific app you're looking for (say, iMovie), entering "iMovie" will

display limited and specific results—in this case, iMovie and an app called Clips For iMovie. If instead you're looking for something less specific, such as an app that will perform a certain function, your search results will include more entries. For example, a search for "music recording" returned nine apps, not all of which were recording apps *per se*.

To buy an app, click its icon. You'll be prompted to enter your Apple ID and password; then, click Sign In. You'll see the app's icon float from its place in the Store to your Dock, where it will automatically reside. You can also track its download progress via a little blue progress bar underneath the icon in the Dock. When the download is complete, just click the icon to run the program.

Benefits

The big benefit to the Mac App Store is that it provides consumers an extremely easy way to discover and install applications, and in turn, developers reap the benefits of having a streamlined channel through which to market and sell their products. It's also a smooth way to acquire software updates, which you'll automatically receive through the store when they're available.

For those concerned about being locked in to the Store as the sole means of getting applications, you needn't worry; you can still install anything you wish from a disc or an online download.

Prices, at least for the time being (my guess is that in time they'll go down somewhat), are comparable to what you'd pay for applications regardless of how you get them—some are free, others cost a few dollars, and some of the full-featured, high-end applications cost tens or hundreds of dollars. However, the Mac App Store, like the iOS App Store, also allows software makers to strategically price their products, offering discounts, sales, or other deals to entice you.

Using a Mac has always been easy, but it just got better. ■



The Mac App Store provides a simple, streamlined way to discover and install applications on your Mac.

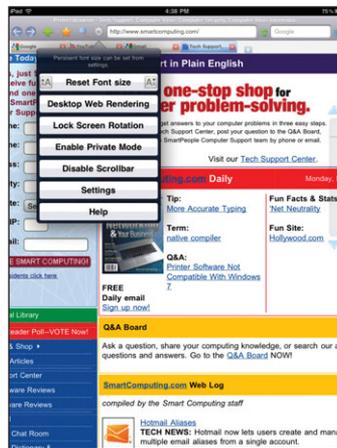
Fresh Fruit

Great Business Apps For Your iPad/iPod/iPhone



PERFECT Web Browser

iPhone iPod touch iPad



Safari is a good Web browser, but the mobile version lacks some features of its more sophisticated desktop cousin. PERFECT Web Browser (99 cents; see the App Store) adds desktop features and more, including desktop-based page rendering (in case you want

to view a site as if you were *not* using a mobile device), a vertical scrollbar, compatibility with multitouch gestures, private browsing, on-the-fly changes in font size, and the ability to block images for faster loading. Best of all, PERFECT Web Browser adds true tabbed browsing and will import your IE (Internet Explorer) or Firefox bookmarks. It also generates a video-out signal on your device, so if you have the appropriate video cables, you can display the browser on a monitor or other VGA-compatible device. It may not *really* be “perfect,” but for a buck, it’s about as close as you can get.

Early Edition

iPad



Early Edition (\$4.99; see the App Store) is an RSS-based news aggregator that takes feeds from various news outlets (many are included, but you can add your own) and displays the news in categories and in newspaper format. If you want to view the original article on its Web site, just click the View Original button. It’s easy to add and edit feeds, and the newspaper-like presentation is attractive and readable. The app can import feeds from Google Reader or OPML (Outline Processor Markup Language) files, and it can auto-discover feeds when given a base URL. Early Edition is the slickest way we’ve seen to combine and organize your national, international, or local news sources into one elegant, easy-to-use app. Early Edition is a one-time

There’s no shortage of impressive applications—some of them free—for Apple’s popular family of mobile devices, and many of them are perfect for the home office worker or entrepreneur. Here are our favorite business-related mobile apps for the month.

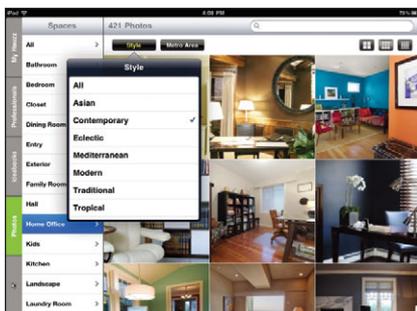
purchase and an app that you can localize and customize as desired.

Calcbot iPad iPhone iPod touch



Calcbot (\$1.99; see the App Store) is a simple-but-elegant calculator with a virtual “tape” that saves your past calculations and the processes by which you arrived at them. The “tape” can be shared in several ways, such as being copied into memory or pasted into emails. You can also paste expressions and results *into* the calculator, which means that results can be saved, shared, and used as the basis for further calculations. Swipe to the left to see Calcbot’s more sophisticated scientific (but non-graphing) calculator that includes the typical functions: *cos*, *tan*, *sinh*, *cosh*, and more. Calcbot has recently been updated for iOS 4.x compatibility, including Retina display and fast app-switching.

Houzz iPad iPhone iPod touch

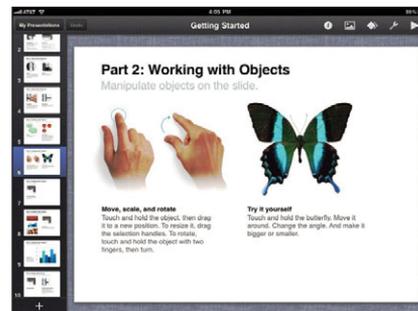


Yes, we know: This is an article aimed largely at serious business types. Well, Houzz (free; see the App Store) provides awesome design and decoration ideas for your home, plus thou-

sands of photos, expert advice, and more. So, sure, if you’re thinking about redoing a kitchen, bathroom, or bedroom, this would be a very useful (and fun) app. But Houzz also contains thousands of photos and ideas for designing, creating, and furnishing your home office. Tons of great info are inside, as well as some excellent advice from professionals. You can also create and share “Ideabooks” on houzz.com and find professional designers and contractors in your area. Divided into 22 sections (ranging from bathroom to home office to, yes, wine cellar), you could spend hours just browsing through the photos and getting ideas for your home or home office. It’s addictive. Don’t say we didn’t warn you.

Keynote

iPad



Keynote (\$9.99; see the App Store) is a presentation app from Apple that began life as part of the company’s iWork suite, but which has now been completely redesigned for the iPad. And, like its iWork cousins Pages and Numbers, it’s elegant and functional. Almost everything you can do with a Desktop presentation application (think: PowerPoint), you can do with Keynote right on your iPad, including building template-based slides; inserting, moving, and rotating images; repositioning slides; and pasting in content from elsewhere on your iPad. Keynote even provides animations and transitions, and does an excellent job of translating and including them in presentations imported from PowerPoint. Keynote can easily import PowerPoint files, and it can also

export files in either PowerPoint or PDF formats, as well as in its own proprietary Keynote format. Finally, here’s a nice touch for a presentation app: Keynote generates a video-out signal, so if you have the appropriate cables, you can connect your iPad to a TV, monitor, or projector. **I**

BY ROD SCHER

Noteworthy App Of The Month

CamCard

iPhone iPod touch

For the money, CamCard (\$6.99; see the App Store) is the best business card reader app we’ve seen so far. It



turns your iPhone or iPod touch into a fast and almost-flawless business card scanner that automatically detects text orientation and card edges, rotates the image as needed, and then uses an incredibly accurate OCR (optical character recognition) algorithm to convert the image into editable, usable text, a record of which it places both in its own database and in your device’s contact list. You can go in seconds from clicking the Scan button to sending an email or making a telephone call to the contact—it’s that fast and that accurate. (NOTE: The app’s performance depends on getting a good, close-up photo of the business card, of course, and the iPhone 3G/3GS camera is not really up to the task without a little help. We used Griffin’s very cool Clarifi iPhone case [\$29.99; www.griffintech.com] with its slide-over add-on lens to improve the camera’s focusing ability. It worked like a charm, and the case protects the phone nicely, too.)

Web Tips

Enhance Your Time Online

Add Up Travel

Problem: I would like to determine how much time I spent traveling (and how far I traveled) this year.

How can I do that?

Solution: TravelMath (www.travelmath.com) takes the tediousness out of calculating travel distance and travel times by providing a Travel Calculator. On the home page, start by locating the Quick Trip Calculator. In the Get drop-down menu, select a calculation. The Get calculation includes options such as driving distance, time difference, flight time, and the closest airports and hotels in the area. Enter city, location, To/From, and Near/In information so that the Quick Trip Calculator can tabulate your statistics for cost, time, or positioning. For instance, select Flight Time. Enter Orlando, Florida, in the From field, and Cape Town, South Africa, in the To field and click Calculate. (The result, by the way, is 15 hours and 36 minutes.)

Create A LinkedIn Resume

Problem: I keep my career information up-to-date on LinkedIn and don't want to type all of that info into a

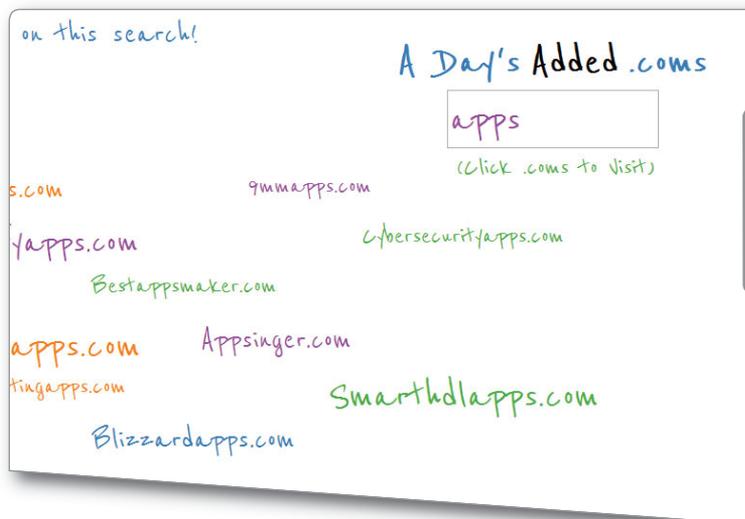
résumé. How can I print my career info from LinkedIn as a résumé?

Solution: You can convert your LinkedIn Profile to a formatted résumé via the Resume Builder from LinkedIn Labs (resume.linkedinlabs.com). Sign in to the Resume Builder with your LinkedIn username and password. Choose a

resume you're assigned a custom link that is sharable via email and social networks. You can also print a hard copy or export it as a PDF.

Find Unique Domain Names

Problem: I want to choose a good Web site domain,



the window so you can compare them to your own URL inquiry and hunt for inspiration.

Watch YouTube Videos As A Group

Problem: I like to share YouTube videos with my friends or colleagues, but it would be more convenient to watch one together.

Solution: The difficult way to do this is to conference call

Addeddomains.com produces a "URL cloud" of recently registered domain names when you search for a new domain.

everyone who is going to watch the video and sync each colleague's play time at the same second. The easy option is to use Surf2gether (www.surf2gether.com). Surf2gether is a video-sharing platform with a chat room that requires no signing up. Instead, enter a nickname for yourself in the field under Create A WebRoom and click OK. To share the link with your co-workers, click Copy by the full link in the Invite Your Friends field. Alternatively, you can tweet the shortened URL on Twitter (and "Like" it on Facebook). Users in the room can discuss the video using the chat panel in the bottom-right corner of the window.

but I need some help brainstorming new domain names.

Solution: This Web app requires a single action: type in a potential domain name (or words in a domain) and let A Day's Added .Coms (www.addeddomains.com) produce a list of similar domains that were registered in one day. For example, start typing the URL you would like to use. Similar URLs will appear (in various colors), scattered around

Plugged In



The Surf2gether.com Web app lets you and other users simultaneously watch the same video from computers in different locations.

Web page. Installing Notforest is incredibly simple: Click the Notforest link in the middle of the page and drag it to your bookmarks toolbar or folder. When you visit a site that you want Notforest to declutter, click the Not-forest bookmark and watch the page convert to a version that includes only text. You can adjust the text and background hues by clicking via the controls in the upper-right corner. Click the Show Original Page link to turn off Notforest. (NOTE: Not-forest handled Chrome, Firefox, and Safari without problems in our tests. At press time, it did not

work with Internet Explorer on our test systems.)

Search Twitter History

Problem: I can search my Twitter timeline no further than the previous 10 days.

Solution: Twitter is designed to let you search tweets up to a certain time in the past, but SnapBird (www.snapbird.org) provides extra search options. With SnapBird, you can search beyond the last 10 days in your Twitter history. You can also search your friends' tweets and related messages. Before you get started, be sure to authenticate your SnapBird inquiries by signing in to Twitter. In the Search drop-down menu, select from the six search options, such as Tweets Mentioning You or Your Sent Direct Messages. In the Who? box, type the Twitter information that

corresponds with the Search menu selection. In other words, if you choose Someone's Timeline, you will need to enter the Twitter profile name. If you're searching your own sent direct messages, you can enter your own profile name. ■

BY JOANNA CLAY

Notforest clears visual distractions from Web pages so you can focus on the text.

Add Real-Time Chat

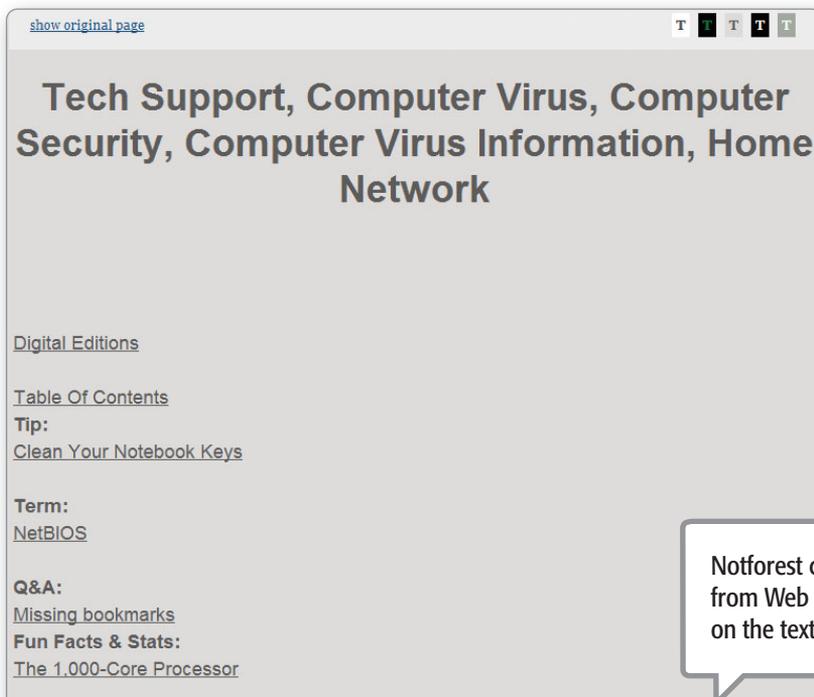
Problem: I need a feature on my Web site that helps customers contact me with questions.

Solution: The ChatBadge (www.chatbadge.com) beta chat tool adds a live chat service to your Web site, so you can converse with customers who have questions about how a product works or how to buy it. ChatBadge can function as a customer service virtual kiosk so that patrons won't have to stay on hold or send a support email. Customers can get the attention they need instead of scouring your Web site for a certain product specification or feature. To create a personalized ChatBadge for your Web site, sign up for an account and use the Badge Designer to customize the dimensions, message, font, colors, and other features. ChatBadge supports unlimited operators, Web sites, and domains.

Remove Web Page Clutter

Problem: When I read news articles, I get distracted by the advertisements and links that crowd the text.

Solution: Notforest (www.notforest.com) is a small app that hides ads, sidebars, and other links that can cause you to break concentration when you're reading a blog, article, or text-heavy



Plugged In

A server device (such as these Dell Power Edge systems) may look like a desktop PC, but is optimized for networking and storage (rather than graphics and other end-user needs).



Host An Internet Server

Inside, Looking Out

For many small businesses and consumers, the concept of having your data available to you from anywhere in the world means using a service, such as GoToMyPC (www.gotomypc.com) or LogMeIn (www.logmein.com). An Internet server (also called a Web server or outward-facing server) does much the same thing, and more. It can host Web sites, give staff and clients access to important documents, and even enable you to host your own radio program.

Depending on your business requirements, hosting an Internet server can lead to huge productivity gains. We spoke with two Atlanta-based IT experts: Gary Nichols, CEO of IT consulting and services firm InterDev (www.interdev.com), and Dave Moorman, president of managed services

and IT infrastructure firm DynaSis (www.dynasis.com), to get their takes on the benefits and pitfalls.

Internet Servers

An **Internet server** is a computer intended to deliver and receive meaningful amounts of data over the Internet at the initiation of a remote user, Web site, or other requestor. An Internet server can be a standalone device, or it can be a virtual server created from an existing physical server, such as your office network/file server. If you opt for a standalone device, it's possible (but not recommended) to use a desktop PC, provided it is powerful enough to meet your needs.

Internet servers are easiest to deploy in **client-server** environments

(where multiple users access files and applications on a central server). If your network uses a **peer-to-peer** configuration (multiple PCs connect to each other rather than through a server), it will be more difficult and dangerous to set up and manage an Internet server.

Why Would You Want One?

Obviously, this idea of letting outsiders into a server on your home or office network is exactly what security experts constantly warn average PC users against. Certainly, this setup presents more security issues than having a server or PC locked down tight and not allowing outside access. Nevertheless, the reasons for wanting an outward-facing server are myriad.

Plugged In

"If you're looking to host a **brochureware** site [a Web site with basic marketing information that is targeted at potential customers], then GoDaddy can do the job for a lot less," Nichols says. "If you want a customer portal on your Web site, or you're a home-based startup with employees working from other locations, then it makes sense to do this." Some of the applications and services Nichols says will appeal to small businesses follow.

Remote Desktop. Remote Desktop is a feature of Windows XP/Vista/7 that can provide functionality similar to that of the Web-based remote access services mentioned earlier. However, remote desktop functionality is also available in server editions of Windows. (In this environment, it is often referred to as Terminal Services, the original name for the technology.)

With it, users (including non-employees) can remotely access the files and applications stored on your server, although the number of concurrent users will depend upon your software licenses and other factors. Access can be established by user or group (for example, Marketing), and a function called Active Directory can facilitate group access management.

"If you are dealing with inclement weather like we had this winter, having remote access can pay for itself with one weather event," says Nichols. "It also allows you to respond to requests beyond business hours, and it's a real benefit for geographically dispersed businesses. Some of the fastest growing small companies are being run out of somebody's home, and it enables them to keep the office footprint to a minimum."

SharePoint. SharePoint is another program whose basic version is free with Windows Server. In an outward-facing setup, SharePoint lets you publish content, assign and track tasks, and route documents, not only internally but also remotely to personnel, clients, and anyone with the SharePoint login you provide.



"If you want a customer portal on your Web site, or you're a home-based startup with employees working from other locations, then it makes sense to [use an Internet server]," says **GARY NICHOLS**, CEO of IT consulting and services firm InterDev.



"During the ice storm that we had in Atlanta, a lot of people lost power," notes **DAVE MOORMAN**, president of managed services and IT infrastructure firm DynaSis. "Your prospects or vendors might be on the West Coast or in Dallas, and they are not affected by these disasters."

The free version has an Active Directory tie-in, making it easy to tailor access for individuals external to your organization.

Depending on your version of SharePoint, Nichols says, "It can give you a way to write applications and expose them to the outside world without writing a single line of code." SharePoint also has built-in database capabilities that would require extensive coding on a regular Web site. If you're intrigued by the idea of SharePoint, an outward-facing server will help you derive maximum benefit from it.

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol). In addition to hosting your own Web site or remote file server, you can also host your own telephone service with an outward-facing server. Deploying VoIP not only lets your employees utilize the connection outside the office (potentially saving you money), but more importantly, it also lets them connect to your office telephone system from anywhere. "Let's say my client calls the office, but I am at a vacation home on the lake," says Nichols. "With an outward-facing server, the call can come straight through to me." Nichols points out that "VoIP is another hole that you need to make in your firewall," but nevertheless, the potential for seamless, unified communication is compelling.

Streaming media. With an Internet server, you can host your own streaming media feeds. This goes well beyond playing some favorite tunes. You could, for example, host your own Internet radio show, giving favorite customers (or your staff) a turn as guest experts. Such an opportunity, especially if you pick up a big audience, is practically invaluable.

Extra perks. There are plenty of other common uses for an Internet Server, such as hosting your own Web site and enabling secure access to corporate email via PC or mobile phone. These features (especially Web hosting) become far more powerful if

Plugged In

you implement an Internet server with some of the services that we have already discussed.

For example, if you host your own Web site on a server that is tied to your network server and files, you can exchange information with staff and/or clients, from inventory data to customer contact information, in real time. Such interfaces may require custom coding, so it's important to seek trustworthy professional help at this level.

Why Wouldn't You Want One?

Do you and your staff need (or will your clients expect) uninterrupted availability? If so, you'll need a constant power feed, which means a generator. "During the ice storm that we had in Atlanta, a lot of people lost power," says Moorman. "Your prospects or vendors might be on the West Coast or in Dallas, and they are not affected by these disasters."

Likewise, your Internet connection will need to be continual to avoid

computer user will find too confusing to attempt on his own. An initial consultation with an IT person or firm you trust will help determine whether you can go it alone.

Some companies may be able to get by with setup assistance and the occasional tune-up (don't forget weekly software patching); others may opt for a managed IT services firm to handle these tasks. (In no case should the addition of an Internet server require you to hire a full, in-house IT staff.)

What You Need

To those who want to host an Internet server, both our experts say a commercial-grade hardware firewall is a must. You are a bigger target than a consumer. For users on a budget, they recommend a basic security appliance, such as one offered by SonicWALL (www.sonicwall.com). Optionally, companies wishing for more granular control can buy (or lease) higher-end equipment from SonicWALL and other companies.

specific file shares—try to log in incorrectly and see what happens. Consider paying a security firm to try and penetrate your firewall.

Other Options

It's important to segment live and static data. If the data you are sharing doesn't need to be updated in real time, such as weekly sales reports, a standalone Internet server—separate from your internal network—is the way to go.

Also, keep in mind that you can accomplish all the functionality we've mentioned here by having a server hosted at a data center. This gives you scalability you may need later.

Alternately, if you want to start small, with just some of this functionality, you can. For example, the commercial-grade firewalls we mentioned earlier incorporate built-in SSL-VPN (Secure Sockets Layer-virtual private network) capabilities, enabling your users to go to a dedicated Web site and access your system securely. Even VoIP



A commercial-grade firewall such as this SonicWALL appliance is a must-have if you want an outward-facing server.

service disruptions. That likely means you'll need multiple Internet connections or an enterprise-grade connection from a provider that guarantees extremely high uptime. If your customers expect to be able to retrieve specific information and you fail them, Moorman notes, "it can really damage your brand."

Both our experts agree that implementing and running an Internet server may be something the average

Regarding your physical server, Moorman recommends purchasing a server from a well-known company such as Dell or HP and use a Microsoft OS. "Choose a name brand over a white box," says Moorman. "We recommend running the Web server on Windows 2008 rather than Linux, as it is a lot more intuitive and easier to learn."

Once you have installed the server and established access controls—whether they are users and groups or

can be handled via a dedicated hardware device. (You can also enjoy most of these functions via Web-based software services, but the more you use, the more value a dedicated server offers.)

In the end, opening your arms to the Internet can be a powerful productivity enhancer, but only you can decide which features you need to accomplish the feat. ■

BY JENNIFER FARWELL

QuickBooks Premier 2011

Backup As Easy As 1-2-3

Quick Studies
How-To

Business Finance

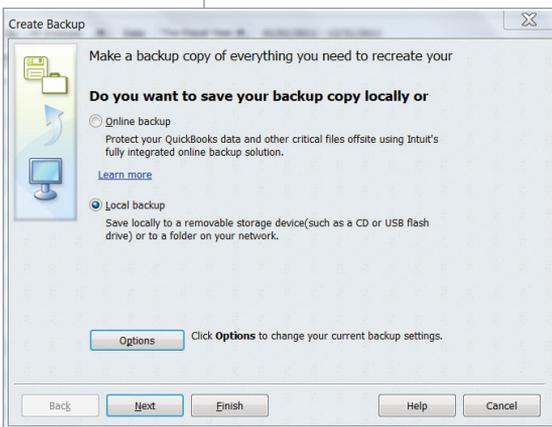
Beginner

Yes, you know it's critical to back up your data—and yes, sometimes you still need that friendly reminder. Fortunately, it's fairly easy to create a scheduled reminder to back up vital QuickBooks data. Creating a backup file allows you to store all your company data, plus user preferences such as templates and printer settings. (NOTE: This process typically does not back up QuickBooks companion programs, such as Loan Manager or Fixed Asset Manager. You'll need to back those up separately.)

Intuit offers an online backup service included in some QuickBooks support plans. But if you don't have a support plan, following these simple tips for creating and storing a backup file can help you skip the backup service fees.

Step One: Launch The Utility

From the File menu, select Create Backup. In the Create Backup window, select the Local Backup radio button. In this case, "local" simply means you, not Intuit, are in charge of storing the file. You can store the file wherever you want, whether it's on your hard drive, a shared network drive, CD, portable hard drive, or flash drive.



Back up your QuickBooks data with the handy Backup utility.

Step Two: Configure Basic Options

Where you store your backup file will have significant impact on how useful it can be. Obviously, if you store it only on your hard drive and the computer is lost or stolen, you lose both the original copy and the backup copy. Therefore, we recommend you either back it up on the hard drive and then immediately and manually copy it onto your preferred digital media option, or back it

up directly to a handy location (for example, a portable hard drive or a flash drive you always keep within reach).

A few seconds of effort can save you hours of grief down the road.

Click the Options button. In the Backup Options window, click the Browse button. In the Browse For Folder window, browse your system and choose the desired location. Click OK. (If you selected the hard drive, don't be alarmed if you receive a warning about saving to a different location.)

Next, decide whether to add the date and time to the file name. Then, select or deselect the box below it to determine whether to limit the number of copies stored in one location.

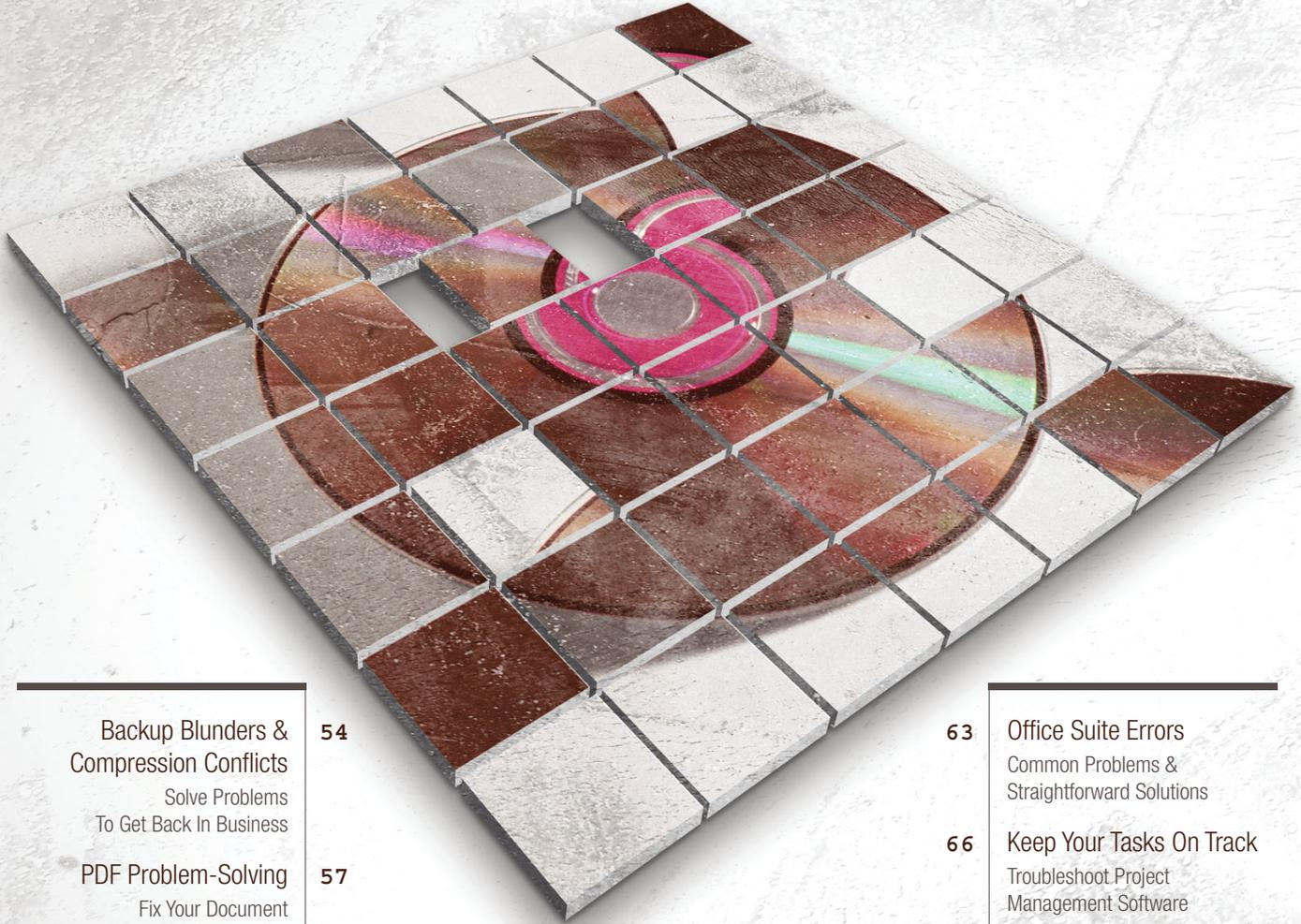
Step Three: Set Reminders & Verification Levels

Both local and online backup users have the option to configure how often QuickBooks alerts you to save the file. We highly recommend you take advantage of this feature. Check the box Remind Me To Back Up When I Close My Company File and enter a number. Lastly, select a radio button to verify the file isn't corrupted (the Complete Verification option chooses the most thorough process) and click OK.

Click Next. That's it; your backup utility is configured. Choose whether to save the backup copy now or to set up a schedule for future backups. Click Finish. When using QuickBooks, you will be prompted to save your backup file as frequently as you asked to be reminded, and it will be saved with a .QBB extension.

You can also save the file at any time by bypassing steps two and three of this article. After saving the file, be sure to then transfer it to your desired digital media if you're saving it to your hard drive. And remember: A few seconds of effort today can save you hours of grief down the road. ■

BY HEIDI V. ANDERSON



Backup Blunders & Compression Conflicts 54
Solve Problems To Get Back In Business

PDF Problem-Solving 57
Fix Your Document Management Issues

On The Money 60
Solve Pesky Tax & Accounting Software Errors

63 Office Suite Errors
Common Problems & Straightforward Solutions

66 Keep Your Tasks On Track
Troubleshoot Project Management Software

69 When Good Anti-Malware Goes Bad
Troubleshoot Security Software

Solve Software Errors

Get Your Business Apps
Back on Track

I

f businesses could forever eradicate one word from their office-related lexicons, a leading contender would be “downtime.” After all, more often than not when “downtime” is uttered, it’s not for a good reason. Further, when downtime occurs, money often starts flying out the

window soon after. Among the causes of downtime are bugs, incompatibilities, conflicts, security breaches, and other negative aspects related to the software businesses use daily, including programs used to back up company R&D (research and development), customer profiles, and other data; create proposals, contracts, and other documents; log employee payrolls, transactions, and other financial records; and facilitate the collaboration among employees and/or customers on projects.

Software problems can rear their heads in many forms, including erratic system performance following an upgrade or a program refusing to launch after installation. The most obvious sign there’s a software issue at hand, however, is the presence of an error message, which to the layman often reads cryptic and nonsensical and prompts an instant feeling of panic. As mysterious as many error messages seem, however, the information they contain can go a long way toward solving the problem—if you know what you’re looking for. That’s where we can help.

In the following articles, we examine common software problems and error messages known to originate from programs commonly used in small and home businesses. We’ve divided these into categories for data compression and backup (see “Backup Blunders & Compression Conflicts,” page 54), document management (see “PDF Problem-Solving,” page 57), finance and tax (see “On The Money,” page 60), office suites (see “Office Suite Errors,” page 63), project management (see “Keep Your Tasks On Track,” page 66), and security (see “When Good Anti-Malware Goes Bad,” page 69). Thus, in the security article, for example, you’ll find problems/error messages associated with Kaspersky Lab’s PURE Total Security (www.kaspersky.com), Malwarebytes’ Anti-Malware (www.malwarebytes.org), and Microsoft Security Essentials (www.microsoft.com/security_essentials).

To present these problems in as straightforward and uniformed a manner as possible, we’ve listed each error message exactly as you’d encounter it on your computer

or provided a general description for more generic problems. Additionally, we’ve translated error messages into more easily understandable verbiage to detail what you’re dealing with and under what circumstances you might encounter said messages. More importantly, we’ve provided a solution for each error message or problem complete with step-by-step directions.

Preventive Medicine

As stressful as software problems can be, many are correctable using the Windows-included System Restore tool. As Microsoft describes, System Restore helps “restore your computer’s system files to an earlier point in time” or “undo system changes to your computer without affecting your personal files, such as email, documents, or photos.”

An example where System Restore could prove handy is if you install a firmware update for, say, a smartphone, and experience software-related problems immediately after. Although uninstalling the update might clear up the problem, if it doesn’t, you can use System Restore to select a restore point that returns the system’s settings to a previous date when all was operating smoothly.

You can manually create restore points, which are stored on a hard drive, but System Restore also automatically creates a restore point before major system events, such as when installing or uninstalling software. Additionally, System Restore automatically creates a restore point at least once weekly if no significant events have occurred. What System Restore doesn’t do is back up personal files. Thus, if you encounter a problem that damages or wipes out a spreadsheet tracking monthly expenses, you can’t use System Restore to recover the spreadsheet. (This is what backup software is for.) You can, however, undo changes System Restore makes if using the tool doesn’t rectify the problem you’re experiencing.

To access and learn more about System Restore, in Windows 7, click Start, Control Panel, System And Security, Backup And Restore, and Recover System Settings On Your Computer. Select Open System Restore, and in the resulting System Restore dialog box, click the Is This Process Reversible? link to view FAQs concerning System Restore. ■

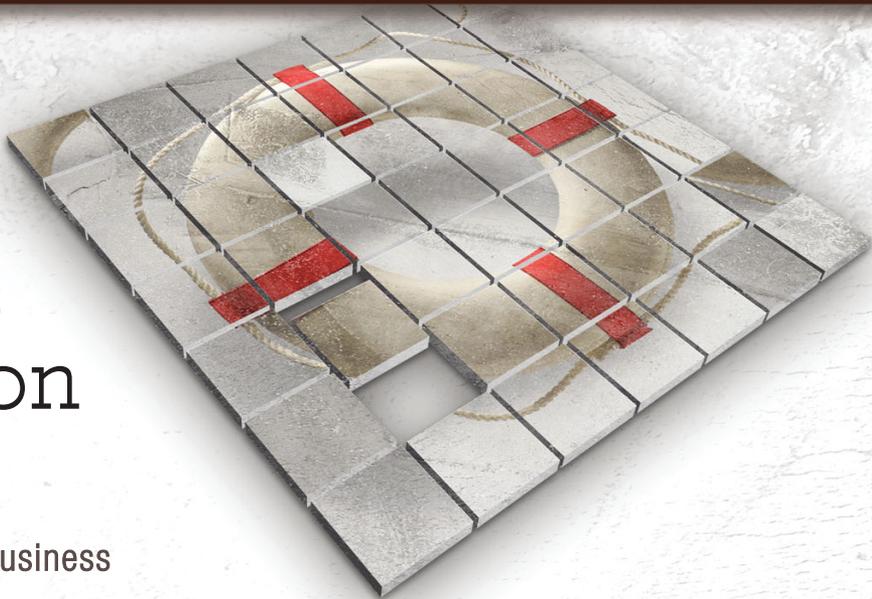
solution:



BY BLAINE FLAMIG

Backup Blunders & Compression Conflicts

Solve Problems To Get Back In Business



I

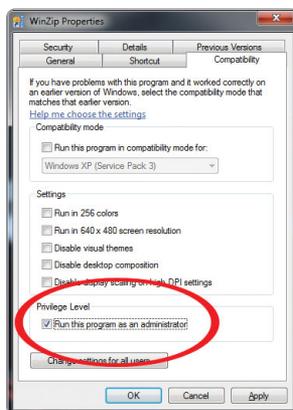
n a perfect world, all of our applications would work without fail. But in the real world where failure is an all-too-common occurrence, applica-

tions often crash, freeze, or outright refuse to complete tasks as they should. Data compression and backup software is particularly prone to errors, though not always because of problems with the programs themselves—rather, many errors in these programs spawn from the files they handle or from changes within the operating system. The good news is that a little legwork can go a long way toward solving errors and other issues that emerge.

Error Message: Could not change to [Path].

Translation: WinZip displays this message when it's unable to find a folder that you typed into a path text box.

Solution: If you right-click a file (or several files) or a folder and use the WinZip context menu to add the file or folder to a zipped file, WinZip requires a path where it will send the archive. Although WinZip will suggest a path and a zipped file name, you'll have the option to change both the path and the file name. If you receive this error message, you typed in a path that does not



By changing WinZip's user privilege level to administrator, you can create zipped files in system-protected folders and run other tasks that otherwise will prompt rights-related error messages.

exist. Make sure you point WinZip to an existing folder, and you might need to create a new folder, if necessary.

Problem: The WinZip E-mail Companion no longer appears in Microsoft Outlook.

Solution: If Microsoft Outlook detects a conflict with the WinZip E-mail Companion when it tries to load the tool, it will disable it to avoid problems the next time Outlook starts. As a result, you will no longer see the Companion in Outlook or be able to zip attachments. However, you can remove the Companion from the disabled list to make it appear and work again.

In Outlook 2010, click File, click Options, click Add-ins, select Disabled Items on the Manage drop-down menu, and click Go. Select the Companion from the list and click Enable.

Error Message: Error 740: The requested operation requires elevation.

Translation: WinZip requires administrator privileges to complete a certain task.

Solution: For security purposes, the User Account Control feature in Windows 7 typically runs programs in user mode rather than administrator mode, but

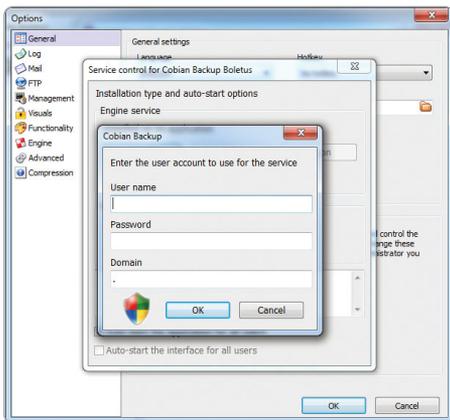
you'll need to change this setting if you try to create a zipped file in a system-protected folder, such as Program Files.

If you have a WinZip shortcut on your Windows Desktop, right-click it and click Properties. If you launch the program from your Start menu, right-click the WinZip shortcut icon in the Start menu and select Properties. Next, choose the Compatibility tab and select Run This Program As An Administrator. Click OK. When you repeat the task that previously caused the error, you will see a User Account Control dialog box that allows you to elevate your user permission and complete the task.

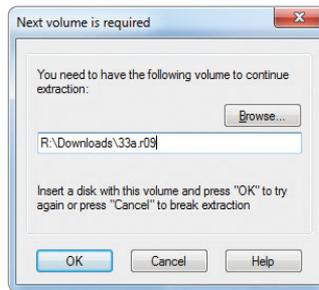
Error Message: Engine is not found.

Translation: This Cobian Backup message indicates a potential problem with the Cobian service.

Solution: Cobian Backup gives you the option to install the program as an application or a service, and if you went the service route, you might encounter this error on occasion. When you do, make sure you're logged in to the Windows user account that you used to originally install Cobian Backup (if you're using a different user account, the service will not start). If you recently changed your Windows user account password, you'll need to update the password in Cobian Backup. Click Tools,



If you recently changed your Windows user password, you'll need to update the password in Cobian Backup to avoid engine-related errors that prevent the program from running.



If you're missing a volume in a RAR sequence, WinRAR will show this message. However, there might be more missing RAR files, so check the entire sequence to look for missing files.

click Options, and click Settings under Service And Application Control. Click the Logon button, enter your username and password, and click OK. If the service is running, click Stop and click Start to restart the service.

Error Message: LocalBackupError1.

Translation: If the directory path (that is, the folder) that you assigned for your local backup is missing, Mozy will be unable to complete the local backup and will insert this message in its History log.

Solution: To fix this problem, first check the path for your local backup to make sure it's still there. If the folder is gone or you renamed it, create a new folder for your backups. Next, right-click the MozyHome icon in your System Tray, choose the Options tab, and click Local Backup. Insert the folder path for your local backups in the Drive option.

Error Message: The required volume is absent.

Translation: WinRAR will show this error when it is unable to find one or more parts of a multi-volume sequence.

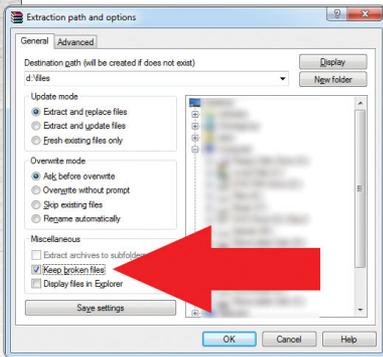
TOP PROBLEM

Problem: WinZip indicates one of my zipped files is corrupt and refuses to open it.

Solution: Corruption problems often stem from harmless inconsistencies in the zipped file's code, but they can also point to damaged files or security risks. If your file suffers from an inconsistency with file header information, you might be able to repair the file with the WinZip Command Line Support Add-on (which you can download from www.winzip.com/dprob.htm). With this add-on tool installed, click Start, click All Programs, and click Accessories. Right-click Command Prompt, choose Run As Administrator, and change the directory to the folder where your corrupt zipped file resides.

To do this, type **cd**, followed by a space and the folder path (such as **c:\files**), and press ENTER. Next, type **"c:\program files\winzip\wzip" -yf yourfile.zip**, but use the zipped file's name in place of *yourfile.zip* (if you installed WinZip in a folder other than the default location noted here, use that location instead). Press ENTER. A new zipped file with the FIXED suffix will appear in the folder.

If your zipped file is damaged, this add-on likely won't be able to repair it. If you are trying to unzip the file from a removable drive (such as a USB flash drive), try moving the file to a physical hard drive on your computer and then unzipping it. If none of these steps works, try to download or otherwise locate another copy of the original zipped file.



If you're unable to extract a RAR file without being bombarded by CRC errors, instruct WinRAR to keep broken files that it extracts by selecting this option in the Extraction Path And Options box.

Solution: If you downloaded or otherwise acquired multiple RAR files that combine to form a single file or set of files, you need to ensure you have all of the files. These multi-volume sequences generally include a "starter" compressed file that has a .RAR extension, followed by subsequent extensions such as .R00, .R01, etc. If you notice a file missing somewhere in the middle of the sequence, or if WinRAR points you to the file in its error message, you can attempt to redownload that file to complete the sequence.

In some cases, the missing file might be the last file in the sequence, but it can be difficult to know exactly how many RAR files are in a sequence. However, many RAR sequences generally have file sizes that are identical except for the final file, which is often smaller than all of the previous files. If the last file in your RAR sequence is the same file size as all of the previous files, there's a good chance you're missing (at least) the last file in the sequence.

Error Message: CRC failed in <file-name>. The file is corrupt.

Translation: This message indicates an error or corruption in a WinRAR file.

Solution: CRC, short for cyclic redundancy check, is a process that checks for errors in code. If you encounter this error message, first try to redownload the RAR file to ensure there wasn't a problem with the original download. If you're still having problems, the actual WinRAR installation could be corrupted, so uninstall WinRAR, download it again, and reinstall it.

As a workaround, you can force WinRAR to ignore CRC errors for a particular archive. Click File, click Open Archive, and select the files you want to extract.

Click the Extract To button, and under Miscellaneous, select Keep Broken Files. Choose your destination path for the extracted files and click OK. If a CRC error message appears during the extraction, ignore it.

Problem: After cancelling a WinRAR extraction, Windows keeps warning me that my hard drive is low on space.

Solution: After a complete WinRAR extraction, WinRAR automatically deletes any temporary files it creates during the extraction. However, if you cancel an extraction during the process, you might discover that these files remain on your hard drive—but not in the extraction destination. To delete the files, use the Disk Cleanup tool in Windows.

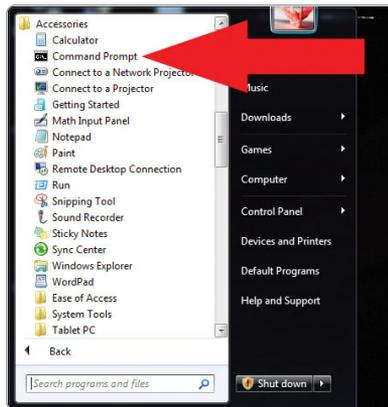
Click Start, type **disk cleanup** in the Search box, and press ENTER. Choose the C: drive (assuming this is your root drive, where Windows is installed) and click OK. In the Disk Cleanup For (C:) dialog box, select

Temporary Files and click OK to complete the cleanup process. The temporary WinRAR files should now be gone.

Common Sense Is Best

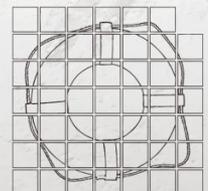
Encountering errors and other problems with compression and backup programs is nothing short of frustrating, but keep in mind that most problems can be resolved with minimal hassle. If you consistently struggle with problems in a certain program, don't hesitate to uninstall it, redownload the current version, and reinstall it. Even if the only available program version is the

same version you're currently using, you still might discover that a fresh installation will eliminate errors. Also, remember that if you move or rename Windows folders, those changes might impact settings in compression and backup programs, so write down any changes to folders that you make so you can reference them when folder-related problems appear. ■

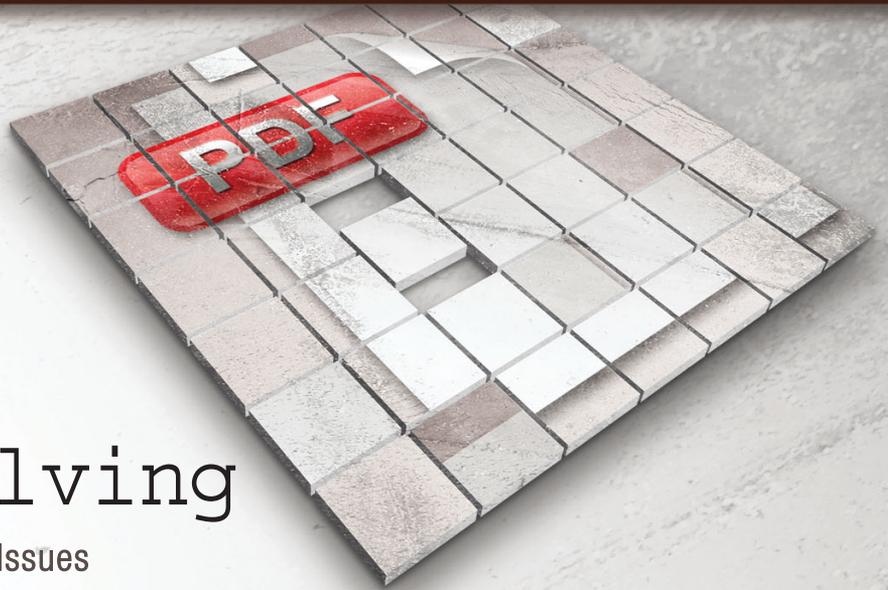


You can attempt to fix errors with zipped files by launching the Windows Command Prompt and using the WinZip Command Line Support Add-on.

solution:



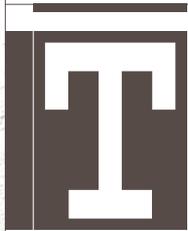
BY CHRISTIAN PERRY



PDF

Problem-Solving

Fix Your Document Management Issues



The dream of the paperless office is alive and well, with millions of people scanning their paper documents into digital form and millions more simply creating PDF (Portable Document Format) files to avoid paper printing in the first place.

The convenience and cost-savings of digital documents can't be overestimated, but that doesn't mean the software behind all of those documents doesn't come with its own set of hiccups and errors. We turned to three well-known vendors of document management applications—Adobe, Nitro, and Nuance—and examined some of the most common issues with their leading small office document management products.

Adobe Reader & Acrobat

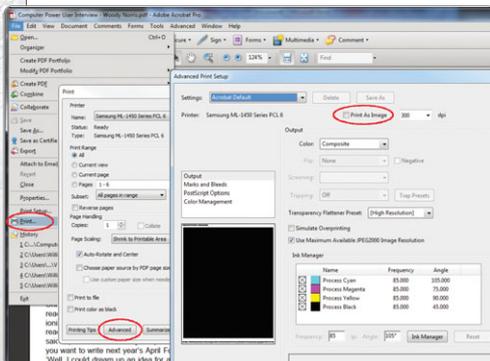
Problem: Adobe Reader/Acrobat won't print a PDF file.

Solution: Assuming that your printer is in working order and all cables are connected properly, there are three usual suspects: the printer driver, file corruption, or some resource conflict. The printer driver test is easy: Try printing to a different printer if one is available. If it works, then you know it's a driver issue. To update a printer driver, simply go to your printer manufacturer's Web site, find the Support section, search or browse to your specific printer model, and download that model's most current driver for your operating system. Install the driver and reboot.

File corruption means that at some point, the data within your PDF was damaged, making the file partially or totally unviewable. This can happen at any location: on a remote FTP (File Transfer Protocol) server, in transit to your system, while sitting on your hard drive, or while sitting on a USB flash drive in your pocket. Your mission is to trace back the copies of your damaged PDF until you find an undamaged one. Usually, if you just retrieve a fresh copy from the remote server or sender, this does the trick. If you created the PDF yourself, simply create a new one.

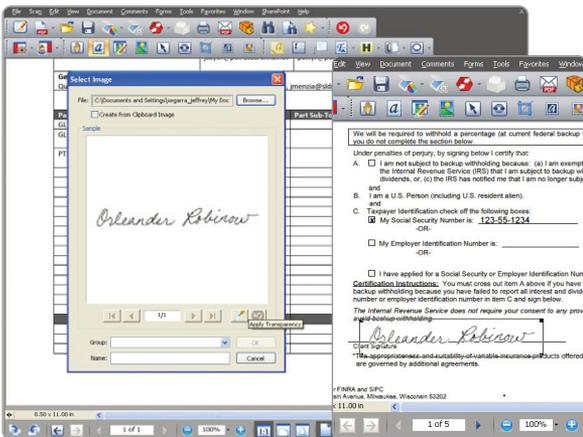
If you have some resource conflict in your system blocking you from printing the PDF, try converting it to an image. Images are handled differently by the computer during output. From your document in Acrobat or Reader, click File, click Print, and click the Advanced button in the Print window. In the Advanced Print Setup screen, check the Print As Image box and then keep clicking OK buttons to finish printing.

When your document won't print, the easiest thing to do is to dip into Adobe's Advanced options and output the document as an image.



Problem: I am unable to view a PDF in my Web browser.

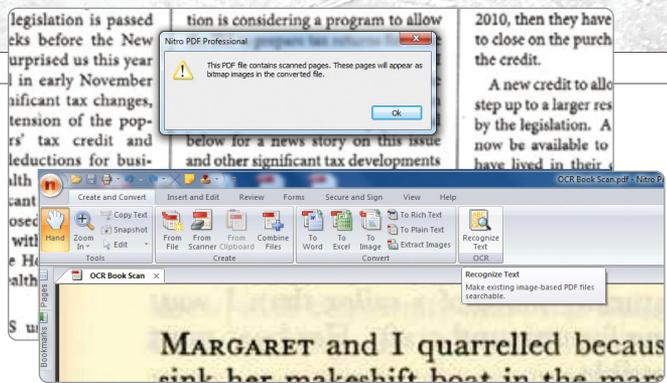
Solution: If you're a long-time PC user, you've probably run across corrupted applications or operating systems before. You may be dealing with another instance here. When you try to view a PDF in a Web browser, the browser calls up the requisite Adobe Acrobat or Reader plug-in. If Acrobat or Reader has become corrupted, then the PDF may not display. There are two relatively easy ways to attempt to remedy this. First, you can go through the Windows Control Panel into Programs (or Add/Remove Programs in earlier versions), select Adobe Acrobat or Reader from the programs list, and click the Uninstall/Change button. Select Repair from the following window. Follow the instructions to complete the operation. Alternatively, from within Acrobat or Reader, click Help and then select Repair Acrobat/Adobe Reader Installation.



Paper waste is every bit as much of a PDF problem as other errors. Quickly dropping a transparent signature stamp onto forms can save loads of time and resources.

It's possible that you may not have your Adobe plug-in enabled within your Web browser. Each browser has a different method of letting you alter plug-in settings, but in Internet Explorer 8, for example, click Tools, Internet Options, the Programs tab, and select the Manage Add-ons button. Locate the Adobe PDF (or PDF Reader) entry and, if it shows as Disabled, highlight it and then click the Enable button.

If these approaches are not working, go back to the original PDF hyperlink. Right-click this link and save



When the source of a PDF is an image rather than a document, you need to use OCR software to convert that image back into text.

the PDF to your computer. Once saved, open and print the PDF file from your system.

Nitro PDF

Problem: When creating a PDF from a document with active hyperlinks, the links become inactive in the resulting PDF.

Solution: This is a common problem across many PDF creation products. It's not so much a bug as a feature omission. Fortunately, many PDF software vendors are correcting this, which is why the problem tends to appear more in older application versions.

For Nitro's part, the fix came with version 6.2, released earlier this year. Download the latest patch or version upgrade, and the problem should vanish. Note, however, that this could theoretically spawn the opposite problem. For example, if you're writing the instruction, "Now create a Web address in the form of www.yourwebsite.com," Word will automatically make that site active. If the active link outputs into PDF, the PDF's viewers may be vexed to find a seemingly active link taking them nowhere. It's the document creator's job to look for such automatic assumptions and manually correct them before outputting.

Problem: It's easy to go from document to PDF but not always from PDF back to document. Sometimes, bringing a PDF back into a program such as Microsoft Word only yields a large unusable image.

Solution: PDFs can be created from text-based documents, such as Word, or they can be created from images, such as from a flatbed scanner. PDF conversion apps generally do a good job at retaining the formatting data needed to send PDFs back into their original document form, but when the document source is an image,

there is none of this formatting data. It's just a picture, no different than if you'd snapped it with a camera.

To get a usable word processing document out of an image-sourced PDF, you need to run OCR (optical character recognition) on it. There are plenty of OCR products on the market, but it's more convenient when the functionality is built right into your PDF software. In the past, OCR accuracy could be pretty shoddy, but the recognition algorithms used in apps such as Nitro PDF have come a long way. You may still have to do some manual editing, but not as much as in years past and far less than if you had to rewrite the document from scratch.

Nuance PDF Converter

Error Message: PDF Converter has stopped working or PDF Converter MV Extension has stopped working.

Translation: A security feature in Windows called Data Execution Prevention is blocking the Nuance application from opening. This Windows feature is designed to prevent malware from launching unauthorized tasks within the operating system, but sometimes it can have unwanted side effects.

TOP PROBLEM

Problem: I can't open a PDF.

Solution: This problem remains our most-seen issue with PDF files over the years. The problem could stem from a corrupted PDF-viewing application (see the main article for the Adobe remedy), but most likely it's because the operating system doesn't know what program to use when trying to open the PDF file. Normally, such file associations get handled during software installation, but it's possible that either the PDF software was never installed (common on new systems) or an uninstallation removed the associated program.

Assuming that the reader app resides on the PC, right-click the PDF file and select Open With. If you're using Adobe Reader, select that program and choose Always Use The Selected Program To Open This Kind Of File. If you don't see the application listed under Programs, use the Browse button to locate it manually.

In the System Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab and in the Performance area, click the Settings button. Now click the Data Execution Prevention tab and then select the radio button for Turn On DEP For Essential Windows Programs And Services Only. Click OK and reboot.

Problem: Many PDFs are forms that require signatures. Most users print these forms, hand-write their signatures, scan them, and then convert the scanned images back into PDFs, thus ruining the whole paperless potential and convenience of PDF.

Solution: The answer seems easy: Sign a piece of paper, scan the signature, crop the image, and then paste it into PDFs. The secondary problem is that the white

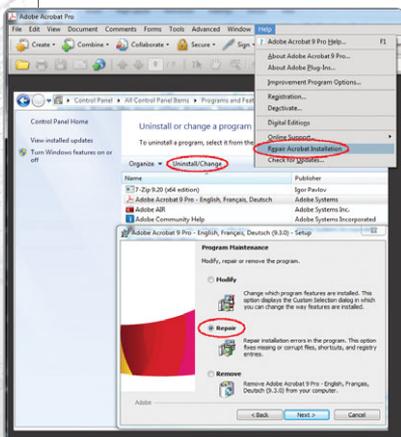
background of the cropped signature blocks out whatever was behind it, which looks unprofessional. Nuance is one PDF vendor that allows for transparent stamps, meaning you can turn your signature into a stamp graph and only keep the "black ink" as part of the image; everything else is transparent. You create this transparency in a Nuance stamp by clicking the Apply Transparency button. Adding the signature to the stamp library will save you the work of re-creating it again later.

Convert Quickly

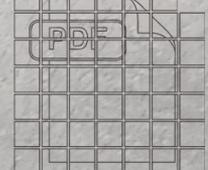
Some people appreciate the environmental benefits of digital documents, but most businesses appreciate PDF files as a way to save money and boost efficiency. We've tried to keep an eye on that efficiency aspect in our solutions here. When troubleshooting, go for the quick fixes first. Moreover, while you should target PDF applications with features that emphasize increasing efficiency, be sure to sample the vendor's support site and see if it looks like efficient help will be there when you need it. ■

Solution: Open the Windows Control Panel, click System And Security, and click System. Select Advanced System Settings in the left pane.

Bad things can happen to good programs. Fortunately, Adobe gives you a couple of easy repair options if your application becomes corrupted.



solution:



BY WILLIAM VAN WINKLE

On The MONEY

Solve Pesky Tax & Accounting Software Errors



N

ame your top three can't-live-without programs, and odds are good the list includes some type of financial application. Accounting and tax software packages make our lives easier by organizing critical data, automating

processes, and providing checks and balances.

Sometimes, though, you may run into a few glitches. Not to worry—we've researched some of the most common problems and compiled their solutions. Here's a look at how to fix issues in four financial programs: Quicken and TurboTax from Intuit, Peachtree Complete by Sage, and 2nd Story Software's TAXACT.

(NOTE: The solutions here are written for a specific program, but some of the fixes translate across software packages. Even if you don't see your program associated with a specific problem, you may use this as a guide to help diagnose a problem in a program that isn't mentioned directly.)

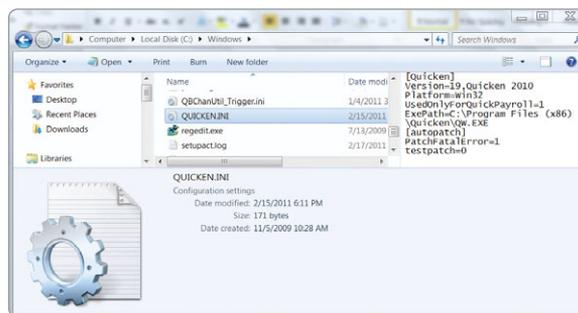
Error Message: Error Code 1618

Translation: When installing Quicken or TurboTax, another installation is already in progress. (This translation may appear on your screen along with the error code, depending upon your version of Quicken or TurboTax.)

Solution: With Windows and many other programs allowing for automatic updates over the Internet, it's easy to think you're installing only one program, when, in fact, another one is being installed in the background.

You can wait a few minutes and see if the other program finishes updating. Or, you can force a hard stop to the update. Right-click the Taskbar and select Start Task Manager. Click the Processes tab. Then, highlight the program being installed and click End Process.

Problem: I'm using TaxACT, and I lost all the data I just entered.



You may need to rename the Quicken.ini file in order to import Quicken data into TurboTax.

Solution: One of the beauties of tax programs is that they allow you to import data from previous years, saving you time and energy. But that's also one of the potential pitfalls. Transfer information incorrectly, and you may lose some of your hard work.

When using TaxACT, it's critical that you import data from a previous year before you begin any work on the new return. The import process overwrites any

data that you've already entered. For example, if you're preparing your 2010 return, import 2009 information first, and then begin modifying the return. (If you used another program to prepare your 2009 return, you can import that information into TaxACT via a PDF [Portable Document Format], but you must import a copy of the full return and not a summary.)

Problem: The words "Do Not File" are printed on my tax return.

Solution: Both TaxACT and TurboTax have this issue, but they have different causes and different solutions. Let's look at TaxACT first. TaxACT typically releases its preliminary version in October, but the IRS releases tax laws throughout the course of the year. If you see this watermark printed on your return, it means you're using a preliminary version of TaxACT—one that was released before the IRS's final laws and forms. TaxACT users can simply go to the Web site and download the latest desktop version, usually available in mid-January.

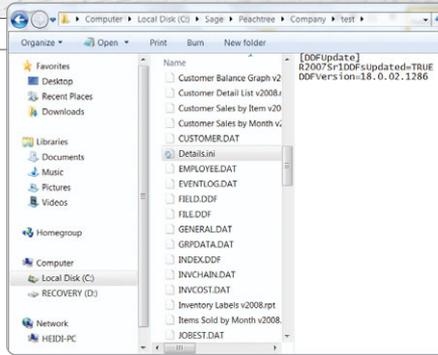
TurboTax users, on the other hand, see this message when they are printing the return from the Preview section of the software. This screen is intended to help you preview your return before you e-file it. Go all the way through the e-file process of transmitting it online and then print the actual copy of the return you filed. The Do Not File watermark will have disappeared.

Error Message: Quicken Is Not Installed.

Translation: You may get this error message even though you've been happily using it for months on the computer where TurboTax is also installed.

Solution: The good news is that this error message may be doing you a favor. The problem here is that you have multiple copies of Quicken installed on the same computer. In most cases, you'll want to have only one version on any given machine.

The key to fixing this problem is to locate the Quicken.ini file and rename it. It can be a bit tricky to



When a company file has corrupted or bad data, it may cause Peachtree to stop working. You can fix this by modifying the Details.ini file.

find this file, though, because it is stored in various locations depending upon the operating system and individual machine setup. We've found the easiest way to locate it in Windows 7 is to go to the Start menu and type **Quicken** in the Search box. From the list of files returned, locate Quicken.ini, right-click it, and select Open File Location. Right-click the file, select Rename, and change the name to Quicken.old. You should now be able to reopen

Quicken and port the information to TurboTax. You should also reinstall the newer version of Quicken.

Error Message: Account number used in this journal could not be found.

Translation: Peachtree users may see this message when trying to save a transaction. It usually means there's some sort of a posting "mismatch" with saved transactions.

Solution: Before you attempt to fix this problem, make a backup copy of your data. From the File menu, click

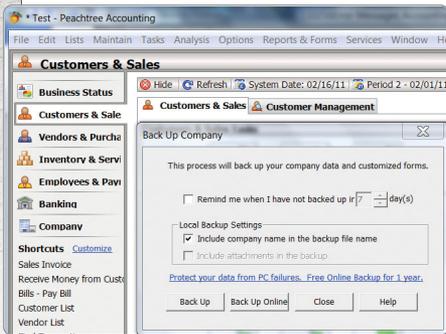
TOP PROBLEM

Problem: You can't install the financial software package, download data from your bank, or perform any other task that involves using the Internet in conjunction with your tax or accounting program.

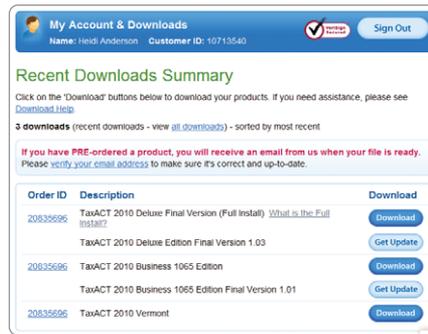
Solution: Firewalls are great security devices; they help keep your computer safe from intruders. The flip side is they also can sometimes block needed access to the Internet. When it appears your financial software is trying to access the Internet but cannot, we recommend you look to your firewall first.

The exact steps will vary, but here are a couple things to keep in mind. One, make sure you have the most updated version of a firewall. And two, check the firewall's list of allowed programs to see if Quicken, TurboTax, TaxACT, or Peachtree are included. If not, check out the manufacturers' Web sites for detailed instructions on how to add these programs to the list.

Back Up. In the Back Up Company dialog box, place check marks next to Include Company Name In The Backup File Name and Include Attachments In The Backup. Click the Backup button. Browse to where you'd like to save the file, enter a name, and click Save. Click OK.



If you see an error message when saving a transaction, the first step in tackling the problem is to back up your Peachtree data.



Is there a large Do Not File watermark on your printed return? Eliminate it by downloading the final version of the software from the TaxACT Web site.

Once the backup is complete, go to the Maintain menu and click Company Information. In the Maintain Company Information dialog box, click the arrow next to Posting Method. In the Posting Method dialog box, select the radio button Batch Posting. Click OK. Go back and save the transaction you were creating when the error message appeared. Then, go to the Tasks menu and click System and Post. Place a check mark next to All Journals and click OK. Lastly, return to the Posting Method dialog box and select the radio button Real-Time Posting. Click OK and click OK again.

Problem: My program windows are frozen.

Solution: This is a known issue with Peachtree that occurs when you open a company file. The culprit is the Details.ini file, which may have become corrupted or have bad data.

Close the program. In Win7, go to Start, Computer, and browse to the Sage software folder. (It will likely be under Program Files, but it may be directly on the Local Disk.) Browse to PEACHTREE\COMPANY*<your company directory>*. Right-click the Details.ini file and choose Rename. Rename the file (Details.old works well) and press ENTER. Relaunch Peachtree.

Error Message: Unknown Exception.

Translation: Peachtree users may see this when closing the program. The “unknown” part of the error message is a bit of a misnomer, because it’s known that the error is caused by a difficulty with Peachtree Online Backup. The root of the problem lies in

compatibility among various versions of Peachtree and various versions of the Online Backup program.

Solution: Those with older (6.x or 7.x) versions of Peachtree Online Backup who are running them with newer (2009 and later) versions of Peachtree have basically one option: Cancel the backup account and sign up for a new Connected BackupPC account. Earlier versions of Peachtree Online Backup are incompatible with newer versions of Peachtree.

Those who already have the newer Connected BackupPC online backup may still receive this message, though, because there is likely a password mismatch. From the Peachtree File menu, click Online Backup/Restore. Enter the correct password and click OK. If that doesn’t do the trick, you will need to reset the password. Open your Connected BackupPC application. Click

Tools and Manage Account Online. Click Forget Your Password? and reset it. Return to the File menu, select Online Backup/Restore, and enter the reset password.

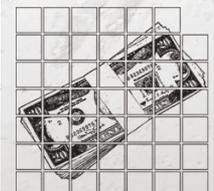
Money Talks

These are just a few of the problems you might encounter when using tax or accounting software. If you run across a problem that isn’t listed here, head to the *Smart Computing* Q&A Board (www.smartcomputing.com). The *Smart Computing* community will have you back in business in no time. ■



When printing your tax return created in TurboTax, complete the e-file process before printing to get rid of any watermarks.

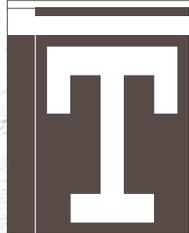
solution:



BY HEIDI V. ANDERSON

Office Suite Errors

Common Problems & Straightforward Solutions



There's nothing better for your productivity than a solid office suite: A good word processor, a spreadsheet app, a few other handy programs—it's great having the right tools for the job. When they work. But they don't always behave

as expected, so we're here to help you overcome some of the more common office suite problems.

OpenOffice.org Errors

Error Message: The requested operation requires elevation.

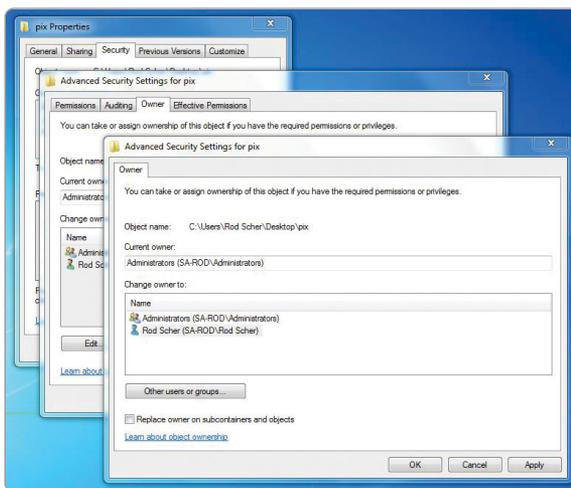
Translation: You're attempting to open a file that requires administrative permission.

Solution: You need to change the ownership of the file. In Windows 7, go to the folder that contains the file, right-click it, and select Properties. Click the Security tab and then click Advanced. Click the Owner tab and then the Edit button. Under Change Owner To, select the account name to which you wish to give ownership. Check the

Replace Owner On Subcontainers And Objects checkbox and then click OK.

Problem: OpenOffice.org seems to be taking way too long to open.

Solution: The OpenOffice.org Quickstarter may have been disabled. You can reactivate it by loading OpenOffice.org and then going to the Tools menu. Select Options, OpenOffice.org, and then Memory. Check the Load OpenOffice.org During System Start-Up checkbox.



Go to Advanced Security Settings to change a folder's or file's access permissions.

Problem: I downloaded and installed OpenOffice.org, but I'm not seeing the OpenOffice.org icon on my Desktop. How do I run the program?

Solution: Some versions of OpenOffice.org download as sets of compressed files. When you double-click the compressed file, you're not really running it, you're just extracting (decompressing) it. Now that it's been extracted into a set of installation folders, go to the OpenOffice.org

folder and run the Setup.exe file to actually install the suite.

Problem: After a minor crash and recovery, OpenOffice.org is saving corrupt files with a length of zero bytes, so I've lost my data.

Solution: OpenOffice.org maintains a backup file that you can use to recover your files. In Win7, it will be located within a path that looks something like this: C:\USERS\\APP-DATA\ROAMING\OPENOFFICE.ORG\3\USER\Backup. (Your drive letter and username may differ.) Navigate to the OPEN-OFFICE.ORG\3 folder, save copies of the backup files to a new location, and open them from the new location.

Error Message: Requires Java Runtime Environment. Install JRE.

Translation: This error can occur during installation, because the installer requires the latest version of JRE.



The OpenOffice.org installer may require the latest JRE (Java Runtime Environment), which is located in one of the OpenOffice.org installer folders.

Solution: What the error message *doesn't* tell you is that JRE is actually included with the installation. Look in the Java subfolder of the OpenOffice.org Installation Files folder you downloaded. Double-click the Jre-windows-i586.exe (or similarly named) file to install Java.

Microsoft Office 2010 Errors

Error Message: Error 1713 (or Error 41): MSI_package_name cannot install one of its required products. Contact your technical support group.

Translation: This message can crop up during installation if you attempt to install using the wrong file.

Solution: You cannot install Office 2010 by running one of the MSI files provided in the Office suite installer

TOP PROBLEM

Problem: All of a sudden, double-clicking the icon for a Microsoft Word (or other) file, does not open the file in Word. It either opens in some other program or it fails to open at all.

Solution: This is a problem that we hear about all the time. Luckily, it's easy to solve. When you install an application, its native file type (normally indicated by the file name's extension: .DOC, .XLS, etc.) is associated with that particular application. When you install Microsoft Word, for example, it associates all DOC files with Word. From that point on, when you double-click a DOC file, it will open in Word. Somehow or other (possibly when you installed or reconfigured another application), the file association was changed to some other application. Now, when you double-click the file's icon, Windows uses the other application (which may no longer even be on your system) to open the file. As we said, though, the solution is simple: Right-click a sample DOC file and select Open With. Select Choose Default Program and then select the program (in this case, Microsoft Word) you want to use to open this type of file. Be sure to check the Always Use The Selected Program To Open This Kind Of File checkbox. Click OK. You've just reassociated the DOC file type with the correct application.

folders. Instead, run the Setup.exe file. To do this, locate the Setup.exe file in the root folder of the installation source and then double-click the file.

Error Message: <filename> is currently in use. Try again later.

Translation: This is apparently a glitch in Microsoft Office 2010's AutoRecover feature, and it can happen in any Office 2010 application.

Solution: Some Microsoft Office updates will resolve this problem. As a workaround, select the File menu and click Options. Select Save. Uncheck the Save AutoRecover Information Every x Minutes checkbox. Be sure to get the latest Office updates, turn the option back on, and confirm that the update fixed the problem.

Error Message: Windows has stopped working.

Translation: This error can occur when attempting to save a document. It usually indicates an incompatible third-party add-on.

Solution: The best way to track this down is to disable all add-ons by running the problematic MS Office application in Safe Mode. To start an MS Office application in Safe Mode, press CTRL while double-clicking the application icon. (Be sure to continue pressing CTRL until the Safe Mode dialog box appears.) If you can open and save documents in Safe Mode, that's an indication that one of your add-ons is causing the problem. It's tedious, but now you need to disable all of your add-ons and

then add them back in one at a time until you discover which one is causing the problem. (Hint: Some versions of Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat add-ins can cause this problem; updating your copy of Adobe Reader or Adobe Acrobat may resolve the issue.)

Error Message: Insufficient memory (or Insufficient resources).

Translation: This can occur when running Microsoft Word and is normally a sign of a corrupted Normal.dotm template file. However, it can also be caused by a virus.

Solution: It's easiest to address Normal.dotm as a potential cause, so start there. With Microsoft Office shut down, do a search for your Normal.dotm template file. Rename it OldNormal.dotm. Restart Word; the application should create a new Normal.dotm file. If the application behaves normally, the Normal.dotm file was probably the issue. If the problem continues, it could indicate an infection of the Nimda virus. Among other nasty behaviors, Nimda attacks Riched20.dll. This file is used by Microsoft Word for editing and saving RTF (Rich Text Format) documents; without this file, Word cannot run properly. Run your antivirus application or see the Symantec removal instructions at tinyurl.com/9ubsq.

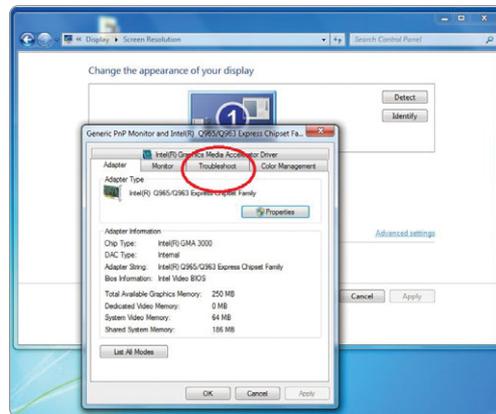
Corel WordPerfect Office X5 Errors

Problem: After adding an MPEG (Moving Picture Experts Group) file to a Presentations slideshow, only the first frame will play, but the audio continues.

Solution: Your system's hardware acceleration may be set too high. Close all open applications. Click Start and Control Panel. Click Appearance And Personalization, click Display, and click Change Display Settings. Click Advanced Settings and then the Troubleshoot tab. Click Change Settings. Reduce or turn off video hardware acceleration by moving the Hardware Acceleration slider toward None. Note that not all video cards or drivers will allow these settings to be changed.

Problem: It seems to take WordPerfect forever to start printing a page.

Solution: When initializing printing, WordPerfect retrieves definitions from all of your printers to find out if the selected printer is capable of printing the document. If you have printers listed as Offline or Unable To Connect, then WordPerfect might experience a delay while initializing its print engine. Go to Start and select Devices And Printers. Under Printers And Faxes, right-click any printer listed as Offline, Unavailable, or Unable To Connect. Select Delete. Repeat this procedure for all such "phantom" printers.



To reduce your system's hardware acceleration, select Advanced Settings from Windows' Screen Resolution dialog box, then click the Troubleshoot tab. If the Hardware Acceleration slider is present, move it to the left.

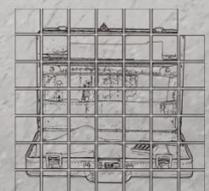
Problem: WordPerfect crashes when I insert a CD or DVD (or when I plug in a USB device).

Solution: This can be caused by a compatibility issue with IconUtility or some other Startup program. To set your system so that IconUtility (or another problematic program) does not start up with the computer, click Start. In the Search textbox, type **msconfig** and press ENTER. In the resulting System Configuration dialog box, click the Startup tab. In the list of items, uncheck IconUtility or any other program you think may be causing a problem; it may be best to deselect as many as possible, test to ensure that the problem is resolved, and then start adding them back in one at a time.

Errors, Errors Everywhere

It's irritating when software misbehaves. But software is so complex—and must run in so many different environments—that it's simply not possible to produce a completely bug-free application that behaves as expected every time. There will always be errors, error messages, and a certain amount of frustration. Luckily, you have *Smart Computing* to help you get back to work (or play) as quickly as possible. ■

solution:



BY ROD SCHER

Keep Your Tasks On Track

Troubleshoot Project Management Software



P

roject management software is a good solution for keeping everyone on track, but teams come to rely on it so much that it can derail the entire office when something goes wrong. We looked at Microsoft Project 2010 and AEC

FastTrack Schedule 10—two of the top project management packages—and tracked down solutions for the problems most likely to vex the people who use them.

Note that tips are provided for Windows 7, although most should apply to users of previous versions of Windows. Also, keep your project management software updated, as patches are released frequently that fix known issues.

Microsoft Project 2010

Error Message: Error 1935. An error occurred during the installation of assembly component {10CD20D2-733E-4174-9D02-2C6C26163DA5}.

Translation: A component of the .NET Framework that Project 2010 requires to operate is not installed on your computer.

Solution: You can attempt to repair the .NET framework, but the best and easiest way to handle this is to install the latest version of it. Go to www.microsoft.com/net

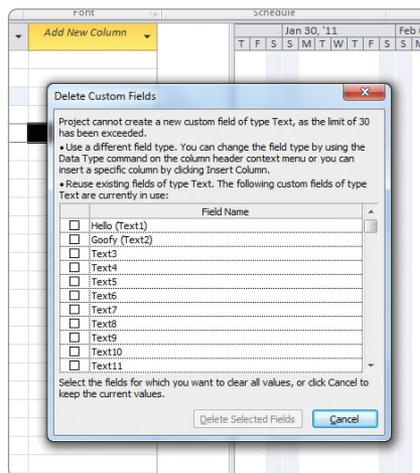
and click the Download tab. This takes you to the latest version, so download and install it according to the instructions and then install Project 2010.

Problem: When I use Insert Column, nothing happens.

Solution: Microsoft has identified this as a problem related to custom fields. When custom fields are added and then deleted, Project 2010 doesn't always mark them as being gone, so this ghost data prevents new columns from being inserted.

To get around this, click the Format tab, click Column Settings, and make sure the box next to Display Add New Column is checked. Use the slider, if necessary, to navigate to the far right side of the table you're viewing until you see the Add New Column header. Type any letter in a cell in that column, move to

the Add New Column header again, and repeat this until the Delete Custom Fields dialog box appears (it may take dozens of tries). Check the boxes next to any



If you are unable to insert new columns in Microsoft Project 2010, you will need to try a workaround to bring up the Delete Custom Fields dialog box.

custom fields that are not currently in use and then click Delete Custom Fields; you should be able to insert new columns again.

Error Message: Microsoft Office Has Identified A Potential Security Concern. Macros have been disabled. Macros might contain viruses or other security hazards. Do not enable this content unless you trust the source of this file.

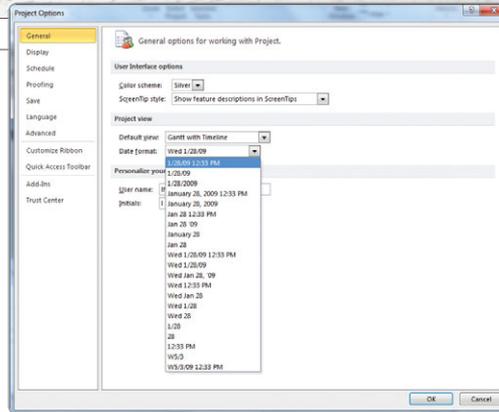
Translation: Macros are outside code injected into a file to give it extra features or functionality. This code can include malware, so by default, all Office products (including Project 2010) disable macros as a precaution.

Solution: If the file you are opening comes from a trusted source, click Enable Macros to turn them on in that particular document. If it's a file you've downloaded from an unknown source on the Internet, it often is prudent to click Disable Macros to turn them off temporarily. You can always enable them later by selecting the View tab, expanding Macros, clicking Macro Security, and clicking Macro Settings. Select the Enable All Macros radio button and click OK before reloading the document. Be sure to return to these settings when you are finished to select Disable All Macros With Notification (the default setting) so you don't inadvertently let malware through when opening files in the future.

If the file came from a source that you feel comfortable trusting all the time, you can check Trust All Documents From This Publisher to avoid having to repeat this process in the future, but we recommend enabling macros on a case-by-case basis.

Problem: When I cut and paste a task, it no longer appears in the Timeline view.

Solution: This is a known issue, and Microsoft provides three methods for dealing with it. First, if you are in the Gantt Chart With Timeline view (the default mode), you can drag the task row onto the Timeline pane and drop it there. You can also right-click the task row, click Information, make sure the General tab is selected, and check the Display On Timeline box. Finally, you can



Avoid some Project 2010 problems by selecting a date format that includes the time.

click the task, select the Task tab, and click the Add To Timeline icon in the Properties section.

Problem: The Gantt bar displays before a task begins or after it ends.

Solution: This is a known issue that happens when the date format for your plan doesn't include the time. To fix it, click File, click Options, and select the General tab. Use the Date Format drop-down box to select a date format that includes a clock that

shows the time of day and click OK.

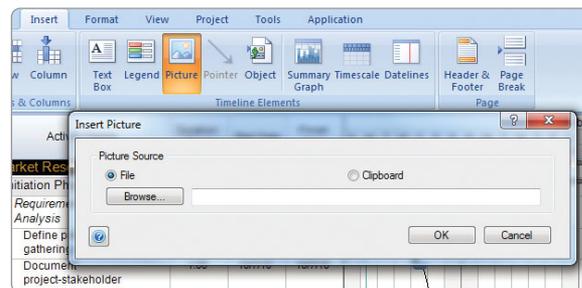
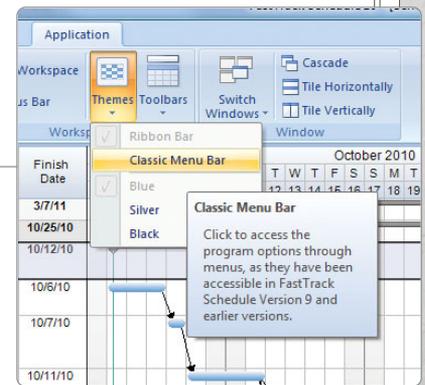
Problem: The following job failed to complete. Job type: Save. Error ID: 9000(0x2328).

Translation: Something in Project's cache is preventing the file from saving properly.

Solution: Microsoft recommends deleting Project's cache, then loading the file and trying to save it again. Close Project 2010, click Start, and type the following string in the Search box: %appdata%\microsoft\ms project\. Press ENTER.

Check the file path at the top of the window that opens to make sure you are in

You can switch between the ribbon and the older interface in AEC FastTrack Schedule 10.



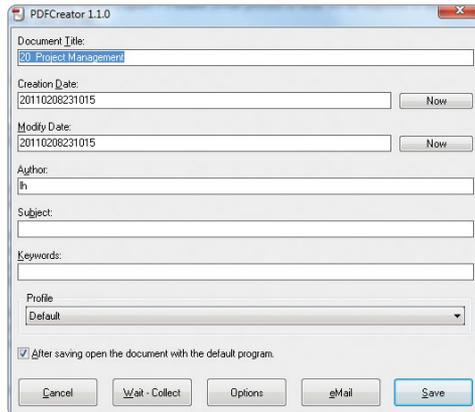
Never cut and paste a picture into FastTrack; AEC recommends you use the Insert Picture command.

the MS Project folder and delete any folders that are in there. Launch Project 2010, open the file, and try to save it again.

AEC FastTrack Schedule 10

Problem: I have an older version of FastTrack installed on another computer, and FastTrack 10 opened the data file from it just fine. When I saved the data file and tried to open it in the older version, it no longer worked.

Solution: FastTrack 10 saves using different methods than did previous versions, so although the file extension doesn't change, the data in the file is no longer readable by earlier versions of the software. There is no way to convert the file so it opens in the older software; you'll need to restore the earlier version from a backup if possible and not open or save it in FastTrack 10. Work from a copy of the file if necessary.



Printing to PDF is a great way to share schedules with others.

Problem: I don't like the new Ribbon interface but can't figure out how to switch FastTrack to the older interface.

Solution: Click the Application tab, click Themes, and click Classic Menu Bar. You'll need to restart the software to enact the change. If you want to switch back, click View, expand Themes, and click Ribbon Bar.

Problem: I pasted an image into my schedule, and it corrupted the file.

Solution: This is a known issue, and AEC warns against copying and pasting pictures into FastTrack. If you need to add a picture, click the Insert tab and click Picture. Click Browse to select the picture before clicking OK. If you have an image copied to the Windows Clipboard, you can also insert it from this dialog box by selecting the Clipboard radio button and clicking OK.

TOP PROBLEM

Problem: I need to share my schedule with someone, but he doesn't have the software I use and can't open the file.

Solution: Project management software saves in a proprietary format that other programs can't open. If the person needs to modify export data from the file, he can often download a free trial of the product from the company Web site. If he just needs to read the schedule, there are two ways you can send it.

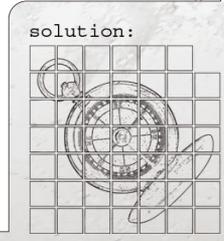
The first and easiest resolution is to save the schedule as a picture (if you have software, such as AEC FastTrack, that supports it). To do this in FastTrack 10, for example, display the portion of the schedule you want to share on the screen, click File, expand Export, and click Picture. Save it in BMP or TIFF format if you don't want to lose any quality, but be sure to compress the file before sending it because BMP and TIFF files are large. To compress the picture, right-click it, expand Send To, and click Compressed (Zipped) Folder. Email the compressed file to the person and he can extract the picture for viewing or printing.

For better quality in a smaller file size, consider printing the file as a PDF (Portable Document Format). To do this, you need software that can install a PDF writer that is selectable as a printer. Our favorite option for businesses is PDFCreator (free; www.pdfforge.com) because you can install it on a single machine or put it on a server so that everyone in the office can access it. Install it according to the instructions, start your project management program, and load your schedule. Click File, click Print, and select PDFCreator from the list of printers. Click Save, select a save location, and click Save. Now you can email the PDF to the other person or print a hard copy.

Back Up Early, Back Up Often

No matter what project management software you use, it is crucial to keep the data files backed up as often as is feasible. One of the big benefits the best Web-based services provide is enterprise-class data backup and restoration, so look for that feature when comparing them. Also, see if there is an export option that lets you download data backups to store locally in case something goes wrong on the service's end.

Conversely, if you use locally installed software, consider storing backups of its data files online. Make sure the files are encrypted and/or the online backup service automatically applies strong encryption to backed-up files, and rest easy knowing your data is stored safely offsite for retrieval even if something catastrophic happens to your business. ■



BY TRACY BAKER

When Good Anti-Malware Goes Bad

Troubleshoot Security Software



W

ith Kaspersky Lab (www.kaspersky.com) reporting 580 million Web-based malware attacks throughout 2010, it has never been more important to install anti-malware and other security tools on your PC. It is also important to keep

those tools updated and running properly. We looked into the top issues reported with some of the most popular anti-malware tools and found solutions that can help you keep malware at bay.



Before applying some of our tips, you must determine if you use a 32-bit or 64-bit version of Windows.

Before getting into product-specific troubleshooting tips, we'd like to point out something that causes a lot of problems: With a few major exceptions

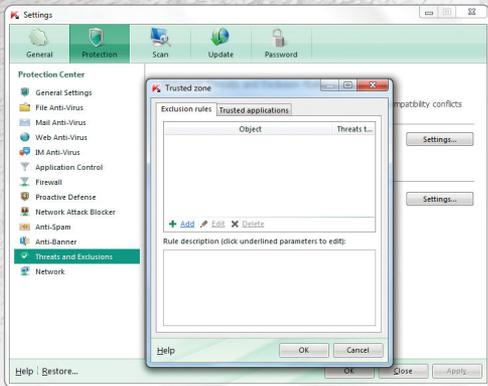
(see the "Top Problem" sidebar), security suites do not play nice together. They access parts of your computer that most programs are not supposed to access, so multiple suites installed on one machine often detect one another as threats and destabilize the system combating one another. Always remove existing security software before installing a new suite and check the manufacturer's Web site to see if there are any special instructions or removal tools available for uninstalling the software completely.

Kaspersky Lab PURE Total Security

Problem: I use a tablet PC, and after I installed PURE Total Security, I have problems moving the cursor with the stylus.

Solution: This is a known issue in which Kaspersky is monitoring the processes used by the stylus, and it causes those processes to glitch, rendering the stylus useless. You need to tell the software to stop monitoring those processes by adding them to its Trusted Zone.

Open Kaspersky PURE Total Security, click Settings, select Protection, and click Threats And Exclusions. Next, click Settings in the Exclusions section and click the Trusted Applications tab. Click the Add button, click Browse, click Computer, double-click C:, double-click Windows, double-click System32, click Wacom_tablet.exe, and click Open. Check all the Exclusions boxes and click OK. Repeat this until you get to the System32 folder, click



You may need to add exclusions to Kaspersky PURE Total Security if your stylus or cursor is unresponsive.

will be C:\PROGRAM FILES\Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware. Double-click the new executable to launch the software, and if that doesn't work, open any folder, click Organize, and click Folder And Search Options. Click the View tab, deselect Hide Extensions For Known File Types box, and click Apply. Right-click the executable you just moved, select Rename, and change the name to Explorer.exe before running it.

Wisptis.exe, and click Open. Check all the Exclusions boxes and click OK. Finally, repeat it again, but when you get to System32, double-click the Wtablet folder, click Wacom_tabletuser.exe, and click Open. Check all the Exclusions boxes and click OK.

Error Message: Unknown Error

Translation: The software encountered an error for which there is no predefined code to aid in troubleshooting.

Solution: You must contact technical support and create a support ticket. Complete instructions for doing this are available at tinyurl.com/4h2nsvr.

Malwarebytes Anti-Malware

Error Message: [attachment=8912:mbamvundoerror.png] and [attachment=8913:mbamerror2.png].

Translation: Malware present on your computer is designed to prevent Anti-Malware from installing and automatically deletes the Mbam.exe executable that the program needs in order to run.

Solution: This is such a common problem that Malwarebytes offers a randomly named executable file you can use to replace the deleted one so that the malware installed on the computer can't detect it. Download a randomly named executable from tinyurl.com/2fwj868.

Move the file you downloaded into the folder where Anti-Malware is installed. On most computers, this

Error Message: Run-time error '0' followed by Run-time error '440': Automation Error.

Translation: Anti-Malware isn't working properly with Visual Basic, which it requires to run.

Solution: Malwarebytes has posted instructions for patching the problem manually. First you must make sure that file extensions are visible. Open any folder, click Organize, and click Folder And Search Options.

TOP PROBLEM

Problem: The computer freezes when I use Malwarebytes Anti-Malware and another security program at the same time.

Solution: Remember when we said not to use two different security programs at the same time? Anti-Malware is an exception. You can install an active security suite and Anti-Malware on the same PC. Run manual Anti-Malware scans monthly (or when you think something bad slipped past the first line of defense). Unfortunately, conflicts may occur if both programs run active scans simultaneously, so you need to create exceptions in your security software so it ignores Anti-Malware when scanning.

The process differs for each security suite, but the files to exclude are always the same. We'll walk you through the procedure in Microsoft Security Essentials. First, reboot your computer, open Anti-Malware, click the Protection tab, and remove the check mark from the Start With Windows box. Reboot the computer again, click Start, right-click Computer, and click Properties. Look in the System Type entry to see if your version of Windows is 64-bit or 32-bit.

Now open Microsoft Security Essentials. Click the Settings tab and click Excluded Processes. Click Browse, click the plus symbol (+) next to the drive where Anti-Malware is installed (usually C:), and click the plus symbol next to Program Files if you have a 32-bit version of Windows or Program Files (X86) if you have a 64-bit version of Windows. Click the plus symbol next to Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware and click Mbam.exe. Click Add and then Save Changes. If you have the 32-bit version of Windows, click Browse again and repeat the process, this time clicking Mbamswissarmy.sys before clicking Add and then Save Changes. Close Microsoft Security Essentials, launch Anti-Malware, click the Protection tab, and check the Start With Windows box again before rebooting the computer.

Click the View tab, remove the check mark from the Hide Extensions For Known File Types box, and click Apply. (When you finish with this tip, you can go back and add the check mark to hide extensions if you wish.)

Next, open Notepad (be sure it's Notepad and not WordPad, Word, or some other text editor that adds formatting to documents) by clicking Start, clicking All Programs, clicking Accessories, right-clicking Notepad, and clicking Run As Administrator. Click Yes if the User Account Control window pops up and enter the following text into the text editor exactly as it appears:

```
regsvr32 "C:\Program Files\Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware\mbamext.dll"
regsvr32 "C:\Program Files\Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware\ssubtmr6.dll"
regsvr32 "C:\Program Files\Malwarebytes' Anti-Malware\vbalsgrid6.ocx"
```

Click File, click Save As, enter the name MBAM Fix.bat, click Desktop in the left pane, and click Save. If you accidentally save the file with a .TXT extension, click its name, remove the TXT and replace it with BAT. Double-click the MBAM Fix.bat file and click OK on each of the boxes that appear to fix the problem.

Microsoft Security Essentials

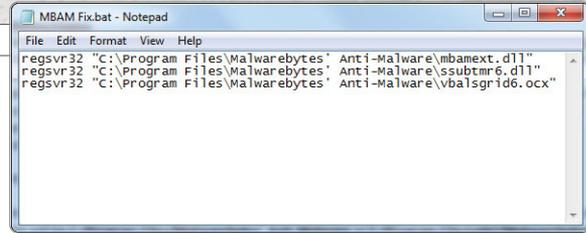
Error Message: 0x80070643.

Translation: This error appears when you attempt to install or update Microsoft Security Essentials and indicates something else is interfering with the install or update procedure.

Solution: Most times, this is caused because the remnant of another security program is still installed and running on the computer. Make sure whatever was installed before Microsoft Security Essentials is removed completely.

Microsoft Security Essentials uses Windows Update during installation and to retrieve updates, and Microsoft also says it is important to have the latest version of Windows Update Agent installed on your computer if you see this error. First, determine if you have a 32-bit or 64-bit version of Windows. To find this out, click Start, right-click Computer, click Properties, and look at the System Type entry. If you use 32-bit Windows, download and run this file: tinyurl.com/276abt5; if you use 64-bit Windows, download and run this file: tinyurl.com/26j6zc7.

If you've already done that and still get the error, Microsoft says it may be because you uninstalled the



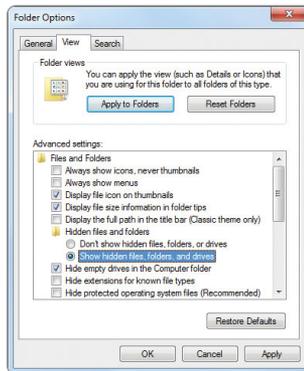
When making a batch file, be sure not to save it with a .TXT extension.

company's no-longer-supported OneCare product before installing Microsoft Security Essentials. In that case, go to tinyurl.com/28ykuj to download and run the OneCare Cleanup Utility.

Error Message: Session "Microsoft Security Essentials Oobe" stopped due to the following error: 0xC000000D.

Translation: There is something wrong with a file called MSSEOOBE.etl that Microsoft Security Essentials needs to run.

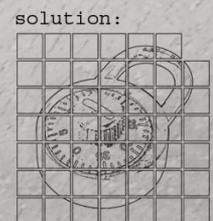
Solution: This is located in a hidden folder, so open any folder, click Organize, click Folder And Search Options, and click the View menu. Click the Show Hidden Files, Folders, Or Drives radio button and click Apply. Now, open the Microsoft Security Essentials Support folder, which is located in C:\PROGRAMDATA\MICROSOFT\MICROSOFT SECURITY ESSENTIALS\Support. Right-click the MSSEOOBE.etl file and click Delete. Some users report that this fix only works temporarily and that eventually the error pops up again, so you may need to repeat the process.



You must show hidden files, folders, and extensions for some of the tips in this article.

Updates vs. New Versions

Most security software patches itself on a regular basis. However, when a new numbered release of the software appears (2.0 as opposed to 1.0, for example), many packages continue patching the older-numbered release but do not automatically install the new numbered release. Check the manufacturer's Web site for your security software from time to time to see if a new numbered release is available. Sometimes, you must uninstall the previous version before installing the new one, so don't gloss over the instructions. ■



BY TRACY BAKER

Quick Tips

Secrets For Succeeding In Common Tasks

BY STEPHEN J. BIGELOW

Wireless Security

Question: Is it worth upgrading my laptop to a network card with WPA2 security? Are there any reasons that I should not?

Answer: If your laptop and network use an older WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy) or WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) security mode, upgrading the laptop with a NIC (network interface card) that supports the newer WPA2 security mode won't provide any additional security benefits. Remember that wireless network security uses the lowest common denominator anyway, so even

if you have a newer NIC, it will have to use the older security mode if the wireless router or access point uses the lesser protocol.

However, if you have an older NIC with a lesser security protocol and need to access a secure wireless network with a WPA2 protocol, you will probably need to upgrade the laptop accordingly with a PC card or USB NIC. Not only will this give you better security for wireless data, but the newer NIC will provide much better data speed and range.

Windows Taskbar

Question: I like Win7, but don't like the way Taskbar buttons get combined on the Taskbar—it's hard for me to keep track of what apps are running. Can I stop this?

Answer: Win7 reduces clutter on the Taskbar by combining multiple tabs from the same applications (such as Internet Explorer), but some users find it hard to keep track of what's



running or switch applications conveniently. Right-click the Taskbar, select Properties from the context menu, and then choose the Taskbar tab. In the Taskbar Buttons drop-down menu, select Never Combine and click the OK button. Your tabs are no longer combined.

Use Taskbar Properties to change the way that Win7 handles tabs.

Office Documents

Question: I don't like that other people who use my computer can see the programs and documents I've recently opened. Can I hide this info?

Answer: By default, Win7's Start menu displays recently used programs. Run your cursor over certain programs (such as Microsoft Word), and you'll see a list of documents that you (or someone else at your computer) recently opened. It's a handy tool for quickly opening oft-used programs and

documents, but it exposes your actions to anyone who sits at the computer after you.

You can easily configure Win7 to stop displaying your history. Right-click the Taskbar, select Properties from the context menu, click the Start Menu tab, and uncheck the boxes in the Privacy section. Click the OK button to save your changes. Now Win7 won't show the programs or items that you've been working with.

Parental Controls

Question: Do I really need to use Parental Controls for my malware checker? It seems like a hassle.

Answer: It depends on your home or office. The problem here is that a careless change can turn off malware updates, allow malicious sites, or disable

the malware software entirely—leaving the system entirely unprotected. If there are multiple system users, it's always a good idea to have the system's administrator (which may well be you) set the Parental Controls. This will ensure that the system's malware protection is uninterrupted.

Quick Tips

Data Storage

Question: I like to save my music and pictures to CDs and DVDs, but I've heard that those discs don't last that long. I thought optical discs never wear out. Which is true?

Answer: In general, optical disc media has a very long life span. Unfortunately, the exact length of that life span is a matter of some debate—it depends largely on the quality of the media, its exposure to any detrimental materials (such as inks or label adhesives that can penetrate the plastics over

time), and its storage conditions. For example, bargain-brand DVDs written on with harsh inks or cleaned with caustic chemicals won't last very long. By comparison, a quality DVD, left unmarked and stored in a clean, climate-controlled environment, might last decades. However, even if the media lasted forever, the advance of technology will eventually render those discs obsolete anyway. Periodically, you'll need to review your storage method and think about transferring your files to new storage technologies.

Scanner Histogram

Question: What's the point of a histogram adjustment on my scanner? Is this something I can make work for me?

Answer: A histogram is basically a graphical representation of the visual characteristics that a camera or scanner uses to detail things like brightness, highlights, shadow, color, and so on. The idea is

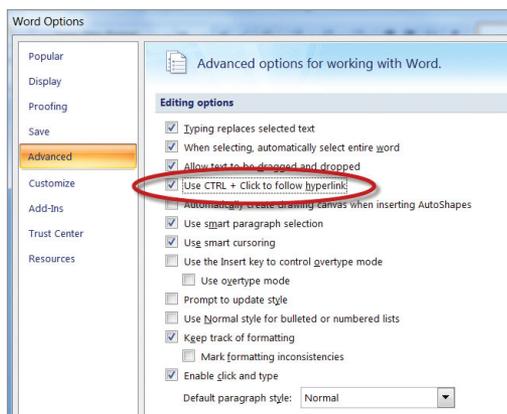
that a digital artist can use the histogram from a "good" image to configure the settings in editing software to improve "bad" images. Scanning and photo software will provide a variety of histogram tools. Histograms are typically the domain of professional digital artists—the ability to use a histogram is an advanced skill set that takes time and expertise to use successfully.

Microsoft Word 2007

Question: I often cut and paste text in Word, and I sometimes accidentally trigger hyperlinks when I attempt to select hyperlinked text. Can I stop Word from launching URLs?

Answer: Yes, it is possible to prevent Word 2007 from automatically launching URLs when you click them.

In Word, click the Office button and click the Word Options button. Select the Advanced menu



You can change the way hyperlinks behave in Microsoft Word 2007.

from the left pane, then check the Use CTRL + Click To Follow Hyperlink box. Next, click OK to save the changes. Now, you will need to press the CTRL key and click the hyperlink to launch it; from now on,

you won't accidentally trigger the hyperlink by simply clicking it.

Error Message

Question: Every now and then my PC powers up with an error that says it cannot read the hard drive and to "Press F2 to continue." I do, and the system works OK. What's the problem?

Answer: That type of error usually means that the BIOS cannot transfer control to the operating system. This may be due to a glitch or problem with the data transfer cable that runs from the motherboard to the hard drive (or it may be a problem with the hard drive itself). It's a minor

problem (at least, right now) because the system works properly after the message appears. That said, it could point to a developing problem. It's better to solve this issue now than to wait for it to get worse. Replace the data transfer cable (typically a SATA [Serial Advanced Technology Attachment] cable) that connects the motherboard and hard drive. Also, back up your important data, in case the hard drive is experiencing trouble. If you're not comfortable with replacing the cable, take the system to a local PC technician.



Compiled by Blaine Flamig

Find It Online

A Poetic Escape

Poets.org

www.poets.org

This site comes from the folks at The Academy of American Poets, which was founded in 1934 and also sponsors National Poetry Month in April. The site packs so much poetry-related goodness, it's difficult to know where to jump in. The site offers an excellent National Poetry Map that directs you to local poets, literary journals, and writing programs; scores of links to online resources; a helpful Poetry 101 section for poetry beginners; audio and video selections; an online store; weekly poet, book, essay, and audio highlights; and, of course, scads of poems, including those organized in Poems For Every Occasion categories. Better, a mobile version of the site (www.poets.org/m) and an iPhone app put poems within a mobile device's reach.

Poetry 180

www.loc.gov/poetry/180

As former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins states on this site, "Poetry can and should be an important part of our daily lives." To that end, Collins created Poetry 180 to provide high schools with one poem a day for 180 days. The poems are meant to be read out loud to students with the aim that "hearing a poem every day, especially well-written, contemporary poems that students do not have to analyze, might convince students that poetry can be an understandable, painless, and even eye-opening part of their everyday experience."

Poetry Daily

poems.com

It should be pretty clear what to expect from this Web site from the title. Each day, Poetry Daily provides a "new poem from new books, magazines, and

journals" from both eminent and lesser-known poets. Accompanying each day's poem is information concerning the featured author, as well as a Featured Book. If you miss a day here and there, you can access the site's archives, which in addition to poems, also contain Poetry Daily Prose Features and more. Sign up for a weekly newsletter and you'll receive alerts to upcoming featured poets; news; reviews; and details concerning competitions, prizes, workshops, conferences, and more.

Poetry Foundation

poetryfoundation.org

If you only have time to devote to one poetry Web site, this one from the Poetry Foundation, the publisher of *Poetry* magazine, may be your best bet. Founded in 2003 after evolving from the 1941-founded Modern Poetry Association, the foundation offers an incredible wealth of excellent, diverse material here, including a nifty Poetry Tool for searching poems by poet, category, occasion, title, first line, or glossary terms; a wonderful Learning Lab for teachers, students, and others to "immerse themselves in poetry"; a Poetry Tours section complete with interactive, audio-accompanied guides through Washington, D.C., and Chicago; audio and podcast

Share The Wares

Some of the best apples in the online orchard are the free (or free to try) programs available to download. Each month, we feature highlights from our pickings. This month, we crack open a dictionary of rhyme.

McGill English Dictionary of Rhyme With VersePerfect 2

www.bryantmcgill.com/works/~cutsxc1gh
Bryant McGill describes himself as an "American poet" and his McGill English Dictionary of Rhyme as

READERS' TIPS

Compiled by Nathan Lake

Have you come across a fast, easy way to solve a computing problem? We'd love to hear about it! If you have a great tip you'd like to share with Smart Computing's readers, just email it to us at readerstips@smartcomputing.com. Please include your first name, last name, and address so that we can give you credit if we print the tip. Try to limit your tip to 200 words or fewer. Not all tips received will be printed, and tips will be edited for length and clarity.

Short & Simple Tips To Make Things Easier

Keeping Your Place

When reading a long article online, many of us use the mouse scroll wheel to move the page up or down. I find that when I scroll down, it's very easy to lose my place, so I highlight a word or line of the text to mark the point where I have read to. Then, I use the mouse wheel to scroll down until the highlighted section of text is at the top of the screen.

Jim B., Hendersonville, N.C.

BCC Tip

When I send notices to my square dance friends, I do not use Bcc (blind carbon copy) because all of the dancers already know each other. If I were to use Bcc, the receiver would not know if anyone else in the group got the email, and he may forward the email. In a case where everyone in the email address list knows each other, you may be better served to avoid Bcc, so that no one receives duplications.

Peter F., Guelph, ON

CHKDSK In Windows 7

In Win7, Microsoft changed the way that you open CHKDSK (Check Disk; a utility that's designed to check your hard drive for errors) from Windows Vista or Windows XP. Click Start, click All Programs, select Accessories, and right-click Command Prompt. Click Run As Administrator and, if necessary, enter an administrative-level username and password. In the Command Prompt window, type `chkdsk` and press ENTER. Win7 will then test the hard drive on your computer for errors.

Jeff W., Lebanon, N.H.

Melting Chipsets

My computer died without warning a couple of weeks ago, and my friend who checked it out said that the motherboard had failed. The chipset had a heatsink on it, and he showed me how the thermal pad had melted away, which caused the chipset to overheat. Oddly enough, the same thing happened to a friend's computer a couple of weeks before. We found a replacement motherboard on the Internet, and when my friend installed it, he put a small fan on the heatsink above the chipset to move the heat away from the motherboard.

Ivan G., Long Beach, Calif.

Change Text Size In A Web Page

If the text on your screen is too small to read, hold down the CTRL key and use the scroll wheel on your mouse until the text size is large enough to comfortably read. Scrolling the opposite direction with the mouse's scroll wheel will decrease the text size.

Ron M., Kitchener, ON

Unique & Unusual Passwords

The best passwords contain three components, including letters, numbers, and other characters. I've found that using your profession is a good way to come up with a secure password. As a chemist, I use chemical formulas, such as $2H_2+O_2=2H_2O$, to create secure passwords that I can easily remember. Professions of mathematics, physics, biology, medicine, and literature, among others, could make up the same type of complex passwords. For example, you could choose your favorite author + author's birthday + book title + genre. Be creative and you'll come up with a complex password that's easy to remember.

Frank G., East Greenville, Pa.



MiFi 2200

\$149.99 | Virgin Mobile
www.virginmobileusa.com

Virgin Mobile's MiFi 2200 is an easy-to-use mobile hotspot that lets you connect multiple Wi-Fi-compatible devices to Sprint's 3G network. After you set up a Broadband2Go pay-as-you-go plan and use a credit card or Top-Up card to pay for access (\$10 for 10 days or \$50 a month), just push the Power button, sign in to the password-protected account from your device, and browse the Web. We connected a laptop and smartphone at the same time, and we were impressed by the speed with which Web pages loaded and files downloaded. The MiFi 2200 is a good alternative for people who want a mobile hotspot without a long-term contract.



by Josh Compton

Biodegradable Case For iPhone 4

\$34.99 | Innovez
www.innovzcases.com



The Innovez Biodegradable Case For iPhone 4 is made of a biodegradable material called EcoPure, so not only is it stylish, but it's also good for the environment. The case is sturdy and slides easily over the iPhone (both Verizon and AT&T models) without obstructing the side buttons or USB port. I like that it is thick enough to protect the phone but isn't bulky. And I think the case is aesthetically pleasing and doesn't detract from the iPhone 4's design. I tested the translucent green model. The case is also available in black, blue, clear, orange, and pink.

by Josh Compton

I-NA316N1-R Poseidon NAS Enclosure

\$59.99 | ineo Technology Inc. | www.ineotechusa.com

The I-NA316N1-R Poseidon NAS Enclosure from ineo Technology Inc. serves dual purposes: It can act as an external USB 2.0-compatible hard drive enclosure for a single computer or as a NAS (network-attached storage) device (once you install a hard drive) that can be used as a SOHO server. The

I-NA316N1-R is compatible with 3.5-inch SATA I/II hard drives up to 2TB. Once you buy a hard drive to put in this enclosure, you can use it as a file or print server, depending on the type of network you need, so that multiple people can access stored files or use the same printer. The I-NA316N1-R supports Windows, Mac, and Linux and allows for cross-platform sharing.



by Josh Compton

Hybrid Tough Case

\$49.99 | Case-Mate | www.case-mate.com



This dual-layer Hybrid Tough Case impressed me as soon as I put it on the iPad. The soft shell wraps around the iPad so that only the ports are left exposed (even the buttons are covered). Once the soft shell is on, you attach the hard shell, which covers the back and sides of the device. Thanks to the case's design, you can lay the iPad on its front without causing the screen to come into contact with the table. If a stand (to hold your iPad at an angle on your desk) isn't a requirement, this sharp-looking case is a solid choice.

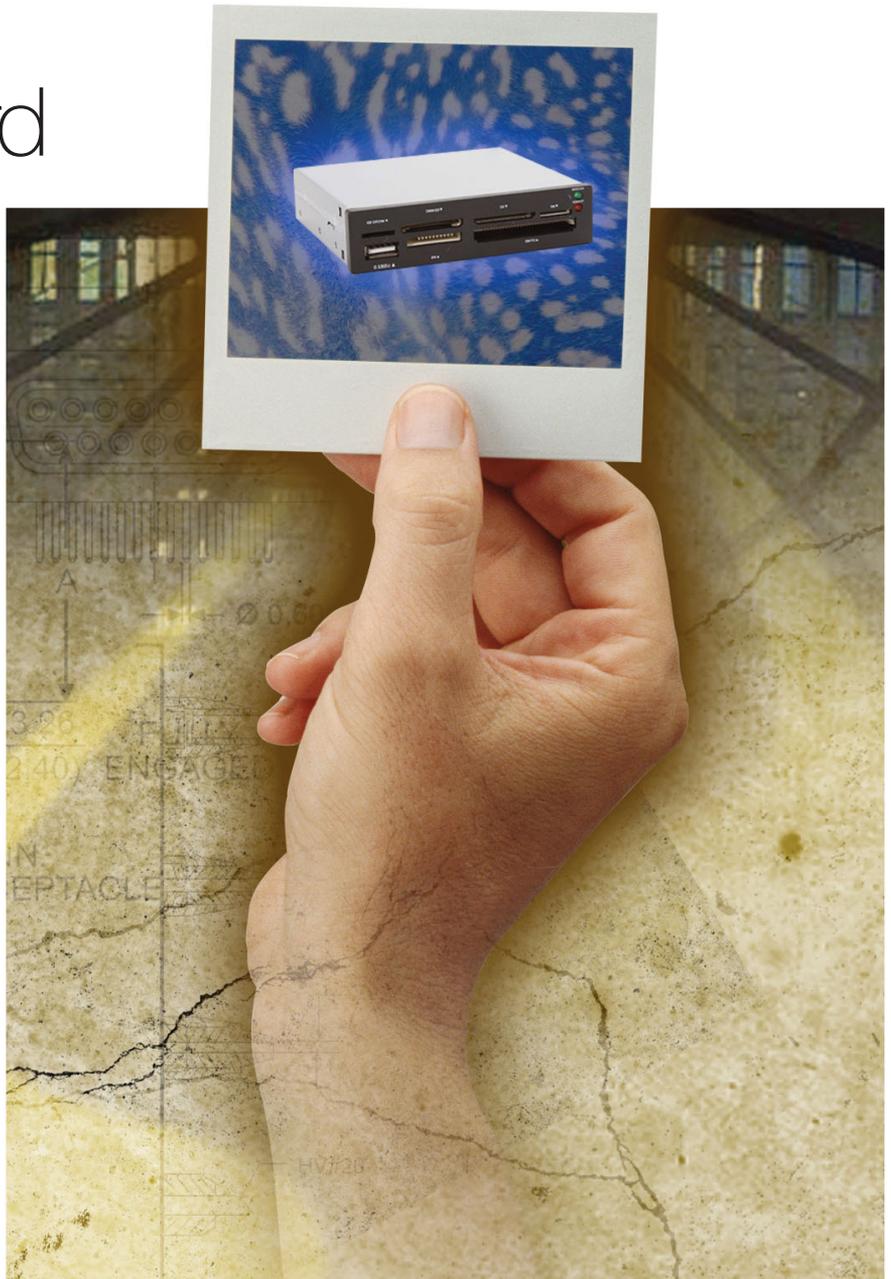
by Joshua Gulick

How To Install A Media Card Reader

Media cards of various shapes and sizes are now being used in cameras, GPS (global positioning system) units, music players, digital photo frames, and more. The cards are handy little devices that can hold much more information than their sizes might suggest, and they make it easy to move data (photos, for example) from one computer to another or from a mobile device to a computer.

But in order to read the media card, the computer must have a card reader connected to it, and that reader must include a slot that's the same size as the media card you happen to be using. You can buy external card readers that connect to your PC via one of your USB ports, but connecting and disconnecting them (and keeping track of their whereabouts when they're not in use) can be a bit of a pain, and it does use up a USB port. For many, installing an internal reader might be a better alternative: If your computer has a spare drive bay, you can quickly, easily, and affordably add an internal reader to your system. We'll show you how.

Internal readers can be quite sophisticated and can include fan controllers; SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) ports; and LCD readouts that display temperatures, fan speeds, and the like. These high-end readers are very slick, but are possibly more than you want to deal with. We went with a simple but sturdy Sabrent (www.sabrent.com) seven-slot reader (model CRW-UINB). This model, which retails for \$12.99, includes a USB 2.0 port and will read a huge number of cards, including MS, CF, MD, SD, SDXC, miniSD, MicroSD, M2, and other formats.



A Walk-Through

This is a quick, simple project—you're looking at a 30-minute job, tops. To make things even simpler, we'll walk you through the entire installation process.

1 Remove one side panel from the case. This part of the process varies, depending on your computer. There may be two to four screws to remove, after which the side panel of the case will slide or lift away. In many cases,

there will be a thumbscrew or a simple latching mechanism instead. Some panels are hinged and will swing away from the case like doors. You want to remove the panel from the side of the case that allows access to the drive bays, but the appropriate side will differ from machine to machine. If you have one available, use an antistatic band, mat, or other method for minimizing static electricity so that you don't fry your PC's components while you're working with them. (At a minimum, momentarily

Tech Support

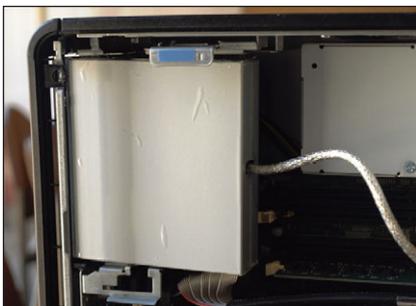
touch a metal part of the case to discharge any static buildup.)

2 Move any installed devices out of the way. You may need to do this so you can get at the empty bay and USB header. Again, this procedure will vary from one machine to the next. On our Dell Vostro, we had to unclip and move the optical drive to get at the empty bay. We then unclipped the hard drive to expose the USB header on the motherboard.



You may need to remove your drives in order to get at the empty drive bay and the USB header on the motherboard.

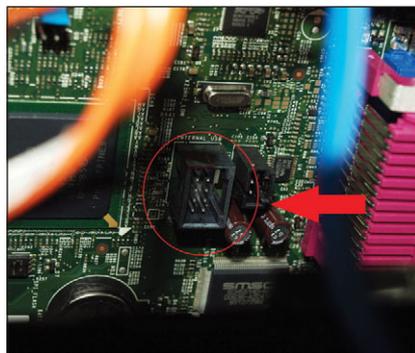
3 Insert the card reader. Next, insert the card reader into the vacant drive bay and attach it to the drive rails. The reader should slip right into the empty 3.5-inch bay, with the USB cable extending from the rear of the reader's case. Use the included screws to attach the card reader case to the drive bay chassis rails. Some computers



Insert the card reader between the mounting rails of the empty drive bay and route the reader's cable back toward the USB header, ensuring that the cable will not get pinched or crimped during reassembly.

may have clips or sliding bays, which makes installing the unit even simpler. It's worth stopping for a moment at this point to double-check that you have the reader inserted correctly. The unit will function perfectly regardless of its orientation, but you may end up with the slot labels upside down, if you're not careful. (Don't ask us how we know this. Just don't.)

4 Connect the card reader's cable. Connect the cable to an empty USB header on the motherboard. Most headers have two sets of connectors in a plastic, plug-like container that contains nine or 10 pins. There are normally two rows of four or five "pins," except that the ninth and 10th pins are often missing. You can connect two USB ports to this type of header; if you connect only one device (as we're doing here), use the side that has the greatest number of pins. Run the cable over to the USB header. It doesn't really matter how or where you route it, but be sure that the cable won't obstruct a fan or get pinched or crimped when you reinstall the drives and replace the case's side panels.



There may be more than one free USB header on your motherboard; they tend to have blocks of four or five pins in a plastic case, and "Internal USB" will usually be printed on the motherboard right above the header.

5 Test it. Sure, we know: It's so simple! What could possibly go wrong? But before you go through the trouble of putting everything back together, make sure the drives are well-supported and not shorting out

against anything and then reconnect the power cord, keyboard, and monitor. Power up the machine. If your card reader has a power indicator, it should light up. (Ours has two LEDs [light-emitting diodes]: one for power and one to indicate that a media card has been inserted and recognized.) Once the system is powered up, insert a card or USB thumb drive and make sure that you can read from (and write to) it. If everything works, you can move on to the next step. No lights? No data being read? Make sure that the cable is correctly plugged into the USB header. If it's a header with two sets of pins, you're only using one side, and one side has more pins than the other; make sure you plug the cable into the side with the most pins.



The installed reader should fit flush with the façade of the case, and the device's lights—if any are present—should indicate the reader's status.

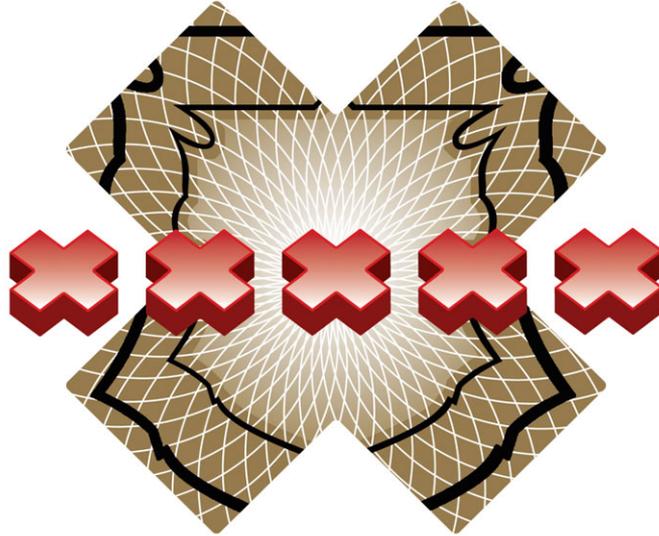
6 Reassemble the computer. All that's left is to put everything back together and tidy up a bit. Go ahead and reinstall the drives, if you've had to remove them during the procedure. Replace the case doors. Reconnect your power and peripherals and enjoy your handy new card reader.

Quick, Easy, Practical

This is one of those projects that offers an excellent return on investment: Adding an internal reader takes little time, costs almost nothing, and adds a great deal of flexibility to your setup. ■

BY ROD SCHER

What To Do When Your Password Doesn't Work



You probably have a wide variety of usernames and passwords for the online services, retail Web sites, Internet banking, and consumer software on your computer. And if you're like us, you might not remember all the credentials, especially when it's a service or software you haven't used for a while or if it's a long combination of letters and numbers. Thus, you may occasionally need to reset forgotten passwords, retrieve lost usernames, or contact the service provider to reset your account.

Double-Check

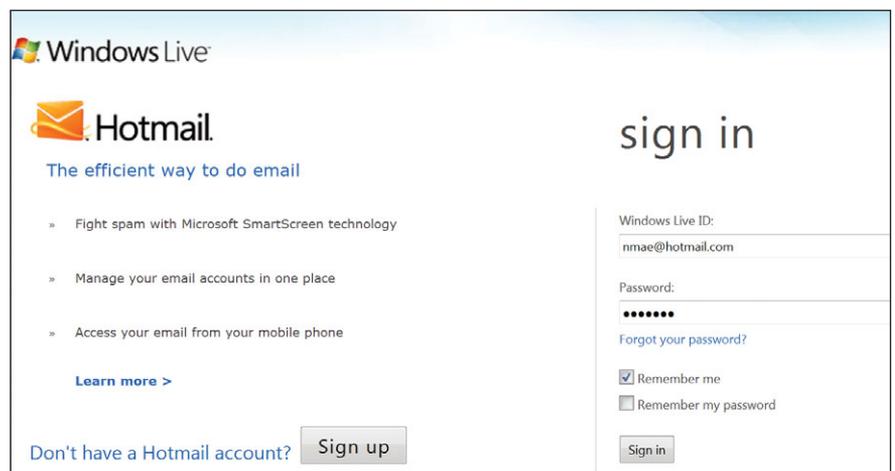
Start by making sure that everything in the username and password is entered correctly. Common mistakes include typos where two letters are transposed or a letter was incorrectly capitalized in case-sensitive credentials. Other frequent typos are special characters, such as hyphens or underscores, where you'd have to press the SHIFT key when entering the character. If the Web site is configured to automatically enter your username, check if the CAPS LOCK is on before you enter the

password. Because most Web sites don't display the characters you enter, look for a light on the keyboard that indicates if the CAPS LOCK is on.

Your Best Guess

If you can't remember your username or password, keep in mind that many Web sites allow you at least three attempts to enter the correct

password before you are restricted from the account. That means that you can usually attempt at least two passwords for each username you enter. Attempting a third password with the same username will often cause the Web site to automatically block your IP (Internet Protocol) address, so we suggest that you only attempt two passwords (per username) until you're sure what the password is.



Double-check that your username and password were entered correctly; for example, here we've accidentally transposed the letters "a" and "m" in name@hotmail.com.

Username Recovery

You've exhausted your brain trying to remember what the username is. Fortunately, nearly all Web sites include a *Forgot Your Password?* link that leads to a page that helps you recover (or reset) your password. In many cases, the site can also help you recover a forgotten username. For example, Wells Fargo's Web site (www.wellsfargo.com) offers a *Username/Password Help* link below the area where you sign in. After you click the link, Wells Fargo takes you to a *Username/Password Help* page that provides you with solutions for all kinds of different sign-in problems. Click the *I Forgot My Username* link and then click the *Username Help* link. You will be directed to a new page where you can enter your Social Security number and type your password to display, which will allow Wells Fargo to display the username. Those that don't remember their passwords could select the *I Forgot Both My Username And My Password* link and then select the *Password Help* link. On the following page, you'd enter your Social Security number, a Wells Fargo account number, and a second set of personal information (such as ATM PIN, credit card number, or ZIP code).

Some Web sites require fewer steps to retrieve your password. For instance,

Gmail (www.gmail.com) users can select the *Can't Access Your Account?* link on the sign-in page, choose *Forgot Your Username?*, and enter the alternate email address you provided when you created the Gmail account. Gmail will send an email with your username to the alternate account you entered. eBay (www.ebay.com) offers a similar username recovery setup. At the sign-in screen, click the link for *User ID in the I Forgot My User ID Or Password* section. Then, enter the email address you provided when you set up the eBay account. eBay will send you the username associated with the email account.

You'll find that most Web sites and software feature a similar username recovery method as the examples listed here. If you don't see anywhere to retrieve your username on the Web site, scroll down to the *About Us*, *Contact Us*, or similar link at the bottom of the Web site and call the customer service number. Once connected with the appropriate representative (you may get transferred once or twice), you can provide him with the necessary info to release your username or have him send you an email with the username.

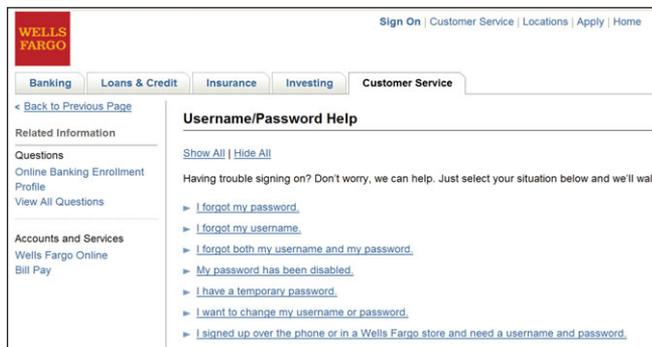
Password Reset

If you can remember the username but not the password, most Web sites

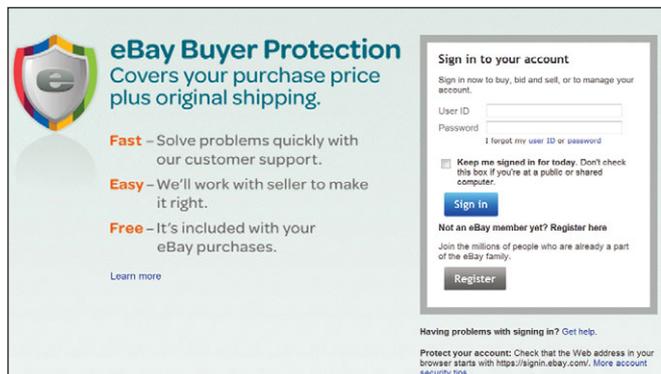
offer a way for you to reset the password. Let's examine how a few common Web sites and software allow you to reset a password.

An Apple ID is what you'd use when logging in to the iTunes Store, so you'd see it within iTunes. From the iTunes sign-in screen, enter the email you used to set up the Apple ID into the Apple ID field and click the *Forgot Password* button. At the *iForgot* page, click *Next* and you can choose from *Email Authentication* or *Answer Security Questions* options. If you select *Email Authentication*, Apple will send an email with a link that will open a Web browser window where you can provide a new password. If you prefer to access iTunes right away, you can choose to answer the security question that you provided when you created your Apple ID.

On the Bank of America (www.bankofamerica.com) Web site, you'll find a *Sign-In Help/Options* link below the *Sign In* button that provides a drop-down menu where you can select *Reset Passcode*. First, you'll need to indicate the state where your account was opened, enter your online ID, and select the Bank of America account type that applies to you. Once Bank Of America verifies your information, a window will load where you can reset your passcode. Note that before the new password is applied, you'll need to answer a few

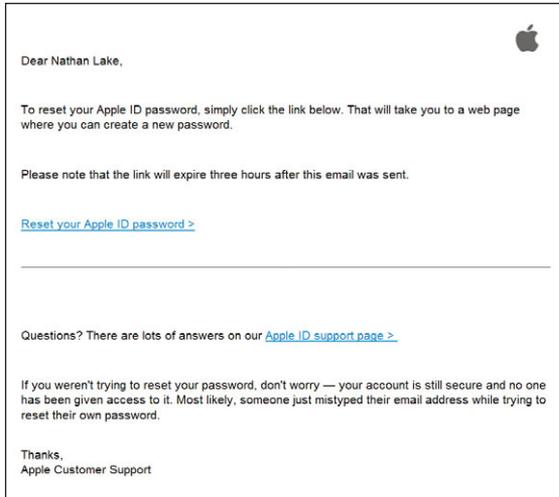


Wells Fargo's Username/Password Help page provides a list of options to help you recover your username or reset your password.



If you forgot one of your eBay credentials, the sign-in page offers separate links in the *I Forgot My User ID Or Password* section, so you can get help retrieving the lost information.

Tech Support



Oftentimes, when you need to reset your password, a link (such as what appears in the email from Apple seen here) will be sent to your email account that you can click to reset the password.

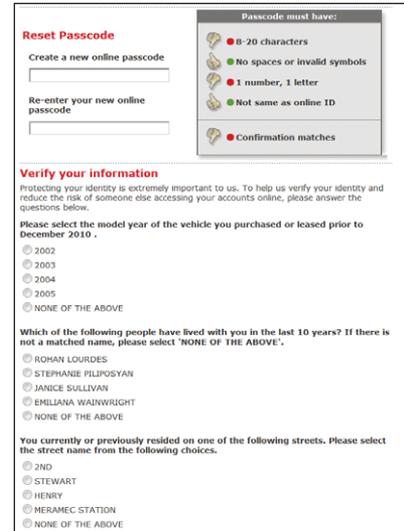
characters that appear in the on-screen picture. Then, you'll be presented with options for Email Me A Reset Link, Security Question, and Customer Support. The Email Me A Reset Link option will

send a password reset link to the address you provided when you created the account. If you select the Security Question option, the question will appear below the window, and you can answer it to reset your password. The Customer Support option lists contact information for a support agent.

Although each Web site's and software's password reset process is different, you can expect that it will take a form similar to the examples discussed in this article. Typically, the password reset link is located near the area where you enter the username and password. If you don't see a way to reset the

more questions (below the New Password fields) to verify your identity. Hotmail (www.hotmail.com) offers one of the simpler password reset options, which features a Forgot Your Password? link on the sign-in page. When you click it, you'll see a Reset Your Password screen where you can select I Forgot My Password; I Know My Password And Windows Live ID, But Can't Sign In; or I Think Someone Else Is Using My Windows Live ID. Select the I Forgot My Password radio button and click Reset Your Password. Next, Hotmail asks you enter your Windows Live ID, as well as the random

password anywhere on the Web site or in the software, find the customer support section on the vendor's Web site and call the company. When you make the call, have any information (such as an account number or software key) you'll need in order to verify that you are the owner of the account. ■



When you reset the password with some services, such as Bank of America, you might need to answer a few questions to verify your identity.

BY NATHAN LAKE

Windows 7 Password Reset

In a domain, PCs that log in to the network must be allowed to join by a network administrator, and you'd need to contact the IT person to reset your password. Typically, a domain group is used in businesses and other work environments. A workgroup is generally set up in a home or small office environment. Similar to resolving the password issue in a domain, someone with access to an administrator account (which is probably yours, if you were the one who first set up the network) will need to log on and change the password. Then, the administrator can provide you with the password, and you can log on to change it to what you prefer.

The problem that many people run into is that they typically log on to Windows using their administrator accounts, and there's only one way to reset the administrator password if you've forgotten it. You'll need to have made a password reset disc in advance, which can be stored on a USB flash drive, CD, or DVD. If you don't have a password reset disc, you'll need to reinstall Windows, which will format the hard drive, and you would lose any of your personal data files (such as images and music) that you haven't backed up. If you want to make a password reset disc in Win7, click Start, select Control Panel, click User Accounts And Family Safety, and choose User Accounts. Click Create A Password Reset Disk and follow the commands.

Password Managers

If you find that you have too many passwords to remember, you can invest in a password manager program, such as RoboForm (\$29.95; www.roboform.com), that will securely remember all the usernames and passwords for you. Many password managers also work with your Web browser to automatically fill in credentials on Web forms. All of your passwords are encrypted behind the master password you set up, so you'll only need to remember the one.

OpenOffice.org 3

Create A Mailing List

Quick Studies
How-To

Office Suite

Beginner

Many of today's businesses rely on Web sites, Facebook, Twitter, and other mediums to reach customers and clients, but there might be instances when you'll need to use the traditional postal service to communicate. Creating a mailing list and mailing labels saves time and makes this task easier. We'll show you two ways to produce a mailing list using OpenOffice.org.

Database Wizard

Let's assume you're starting from scratch; you haven't yet compiled a list of customers and their mailing addresses. The first step is to create a database (using the Database Wizard) from which to draw your information. After opening OpenOffice.org, select Database.

A window welcoming you to the Database Wizard appears. Because you're creating a brand-new document, use the default setting to Create A New Database. Click Next. In the following window, accept the default settings and click Finish. Enter a file name for your new document and save it.

You are now ready to begin constructing the database. Select Use Wizard To Create Table. Designate the type of database (Business, in this case). Under Sample Tables, use the drop-down menu to select MailingList. (For future reference, this

wizard contains features to help you create a range of databases to manage aspects of your business, such as payments, invoices, and orders.)

Scroll through the list under Available Fields. One at a time, highlight the key elements you want to include in your database. After each selection, click the right arrow (>) button to add your choice to the Selected Fields list. There are many options available to help you administer your customer and client information. While scanning the list, include the entries you think you may need in the future. For instance, email addresses could be useful information to track.

For a basic mailing list, some of the fields might include: OrganizationName, FirstName, LastName, Address, City, StateOrProvince, and PostalCode. Click Next when you are satisfied you've selected the information you need.

The following screen asks you to set the types and formats of each field. For this basic database, the text default will work. The Entry Required field asks if you want to make this a mandatory entry—data must be entered in this field. If you want to ensure your database is complete and information isn't missing, you could change this to Yes. Each field holds a designated number of characters. Use the default or change this number if you know you'll need more space. Click Next.

On the next page, accept the default settings and select Next. Name your table. Verify you have included all of the information, and select Finish. The next screen allows you to begin entering your data.

Spreadsheet

Another way to organize information to create a basic mailing list is by using the Calc, or spreadsheet, software. Launch OpenOffice.org and select Spreadsheet. Beginning in the top-left empty cell, enter the "heading" of the information you will include in the column, keeping in mind the necessary elements of a mailing list discussed above.

For instance, in the first column, you might enter Organization Name. Press the TAB key and then enter First Name. Continue to insert the column headings until you have entered all the key pieces, such as address, city, state, and ZIP code. Making these headings bold will help set them apart from the other data you enter.

Your data may be too long to be seen in the cell. If you want to view all of the information you've entered, align your cursor on the line between the columns on the top row of letters. You'll see a vertical line intersected by left and right arrows. Click and drag the cursor and the column to the desired width. Be sure to name and save your document.

Either of these methods will help you establish a basic customer mailing list. For tips on creating mailing labels, see the OpenOffice.org Quick Study on page 85 of the March 2011 issue of *Smart Computing*. ■

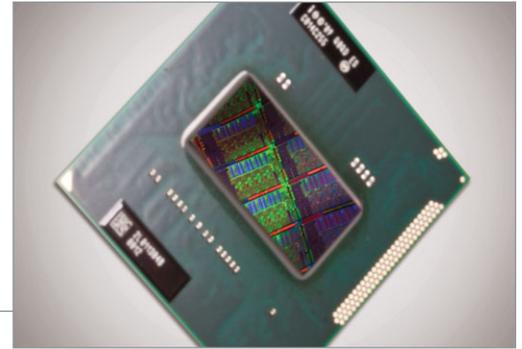
BY KIM QUADE



The Database Wizard in OpenOffice.org 3 helps you create a mailing list to keep track of your customers.

Tech Talk

Answers to users' most common questions about **Processors**



The latest generation of AMD and Intel processors have graphics and video acceleration technologies built-in. Here's a second-generation Intel "Sandy Bridge" Core i7.

distribute the load of processes, applications, and operating system services.

Intel's Hyper-Threading feature, available in some of its CPUs (such as the new Core i7 and i3), can make each core process two threads (parts of a program) at once. As long as you're running software that is optimized for Hyper-Threading, your Intel chip could perform as though it has twice as many cores.

Q What are the basic features of a modern CPU?

Beside the math (integer and floating-point) calculation units we mentioned, a processor has a memory controller for one or two types of RAM. For instance, current Intel chips require DDR3, but AMD models support both DDR2 and DDR3. Most CPU memory controllers are dual-channel and can address (talk to) two RAM modules at once; however, some Intel Core i7 chips support triple-channel memory addressing. When running a recent 64-bit OS, such as 64-bit Windows Vista/7, a current CPU can address vastly more RAM than it can when running a 32-bit OS or 64-bit WinXP.

Tiny, speedy memory areas called registers temporarily hold bits of data the CPU is currently processing. Other memory caches hold recently accessed data along with prefetched data the CPU will probably need soon. In order of increasing size and slower speed, these caches are the L1 (level 1), L2, and sometimes L3 (often called LLC, or last level cache).

CPUs also feature optimized instruction sets, such as SSE (Streaming SIMD [single instruction, multiple data] Extensions) and Intel's new AVX (Advanced Vector Extensions) in its

Q What is a processor?

A processor, or CPU (central processing unit), is a silicon chip packed with transistors, memory, and other components. It plugs into a socket on a motherboard, which is the main circuit board in a PC or server.

The processor not only computes the math that is the foundation of everything a computer does, but with the help of the motherboard chipset (core logic support chip[s]), it also directs data traffic to and from every other component, such as the hard drive and network adapter. The processor uses RAM (random-access memory) as a temporary work space for the software it's currently running.

Q What is clock speed?

Also called the CPU frequency, this describes how many cycles of operations the chip runs each second, such as 3.2GHz (gigahertz, or billion times per second). This effective clock speed is determined by a multiplier, such as 24X, times the motherboard's base clock, such as 133MHz.

Both Intel and AMD provide automatic features to temporarily increase the multiplier (and thus the effective clock speed) in one or more processing cores while others are idle. An example is Intel's Turbo Boost in the Core i7/i5 processors. Other features save power by reducing the clock speed of the CPU when its load is light.

Q What are processing cores?

Most of today's CPUs contain multiple cores, which are complete processors in their own right. Current chips have two, three, four, or even six cores, all working together to

Most of today's CPUs contain multiple cores, which are complete processors in their own right.

latest Core chips. These can accelerate certain operations in software optimized for them, such as Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 with SSE4.1 support (www.adobe.com).

All this comes in a silicon die attached to the **chip substrate**, which is the part with metal pins (AMD) or pads (Intel) underneath. The die is capped with a metal heat spreader bearing the processor model number.

Q What's the new "big thing" in recent CPUs?

On-die graphics incorporates HD (high-definition) and 3D video and graphics acceleration directly into the CPU. These technologies, formerly the sole province of a separate GPU (graphics processing unit) on the motherboard or an adapter card, are found in new "Sandy Bridge" second-generation Core i7/i5/i3 chips from Intel and new Fusion processors from AMD. On-die graphics can also speed up certain tasks that involve parallel processing such as financial analysis, geological modeling, decryption, and media file transcoding (conversion from one format to another).

Q In what ways would a faster processor soup up my computer?

It depends on the task. In general, a higher clock speed can boost activities such as media transcoding, video editing, encryption, some office productivity applications, and file compression. Different chip families do different amounts of work per clock cycle, however, so clock speed isn't a great way to compare processors from different model lines.

In many cases, a CPU with more cores may be a better investment than one with simply a higher clock speed. More cores mean fewer moments in which your computer doesn't respond because the processor is "maxed out," or 100% busy. There is a radical

difference in liveliness between a traditional single-core CPU and a comparable dual- or triple-core. Multicore chip users that habitually run several applications simultaneously can also feel some benefit from upgrading to a quad- or six-core chip.

Finally, many apps are designed to take advantage of two or more cores, as are current OSes. If your computer is more than a few years old, a new CPU could wake up its performance under a demanding operating system such as Vista/Win7.

Q Which types of tasks would benefit more from an upgrade other than a new CPU?

The processor is, for the majority of tasks, the speediest part of a computer. Looked at another way, everything else—including the hard drive, your Internet connection, and even the RAM—is much slower.

And because a big part of those components' job is to keep the CPU

"fed" with data, it's pretty common for a device other than the processor to be the bottleneck in a given task. That's why a higher CPU clock speed probably won't shorten your backups, for example: They're most likely constrained by the speed of your hard drive or backup device.

As for additional cores, a multicore chip should boot Vista/Win7 faster than a comparable single-core processor because these OSes can delegate startup tasks among the cores and work on those tasks out of order. However, an SSD (solid-state drive) or **hybrid drive** (a hard drive with a small SSD cache) would help even more.

Likewise, a new graphics card could supercharge certain video and media file transcoding tasks far more than any new processor. And if your PC doesn't have enough RAM for your needs (if it has, say, 1GB or less with Vista/Win7) adding more memory will effect more change than a hotter CPU.



Today's CPUs have multiple processing cores, meaning that they're literally several processors in one. This is an inside look at a six-core AMD Opteron server chip.

Q How should I shop for a new processor?

First, ascertain whether your motherboard supports a faster chip than you presently have by looking up the board's model number on the manufacturer's site. If so, you might need to install a later BIOS version to support a chip released after the board was manufactured. The release notes for each BIOS file list the features it adds, such as support for particular CPUs. (In most cases, it's difficult to upgrade a notebook CPU, so our comments mainly concern processors used in desktops and other non-portable types of computers.)

Next, jot down your motherboard's type of CPU socket. This will tell you which processor brand (Intel or AMD) and models it supports. For instance, recent Intel CPUs use 1,155-, 1,156-, 1,366-, or 775-pin sockets. AMD's sockets of the past few years are named AM3, AM2+, and AM2 (AM3 chips are usable in AM2/AM2+ sockets).

Finally, check your board's specifications for any other limitations. For instance, some boards won't support a CPU with a TDP (thermal design power) rating above 95 watts. Others may not be compatible with a newer family of chips, even if they bear the same basic brand name as your existing CPU, such as Pentium, Core, or Athlon.

In some cases, it's worth buying a new motherboard and possibly new RAM to support a new CPU.

Q How do I install a processor?

Back up your data, turn off your computer, and unplug its power cable. Put on an antistatic wrist strap or dispel your static buildup every so often by touching a metal object such as a desk or lamp.

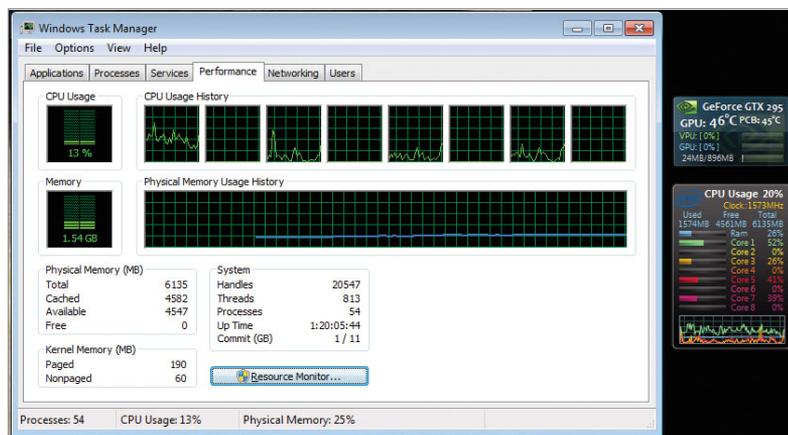
Next, open the computer's side or top panel so you have access to the

motherboard. The CPU will be under a metal heatsink/fan combination in the vast majority of cases, although a few specialty systems use liquid cooling blocks instead. Unplug the heatsink fan from the motherboard, if applicable.

Detach the heatsink by unlatching a bracket or unscrewing its four bolts. In the latter case, you may

you need to pull upward as you twist, do it gently so you don't damage the processor or socket.

You should be able to unlock the CPU by unlatching and raising a lever, and then perhaps lifting a hinged plate out of the way. Pluck the old processor out by its edges and plop the new processor into the socket the same way. Take care to



Here is a great way to visualize how Intel's Hyper-Threading works. Because HT allows each CPU core to process two threads at once, Task Manager and the All CPU Meter desktop gadget represent our quad-core chip as an 8-core. However, if apps are not optimized for Hyper-Threading, such as the antivirus scan we're running here, the HT "cores" (shown as cores 2, 4, 6, and 8) won't take on any of the load.

need a very long, short, or skinny screwdriver to access all of the screws; it may help to remove the RAM and/or the heatsink's fan(s). In some cases, you'll need to access the back of the motherboard. If you're lucky, you'll get there by removing the computer case's other side panel. In most such cases, however, you'll need to detach all cables and expansion cards, and then remove the motherboard from the case.

The heatsink will probably be stuck to the CPU's thermal grease, which is necessary for effective heat dissipation. Twist the heatsink clockwise and counterclockwise a few times, and it may come loose. If

orient it correctly—it will only fit one way—and to avoid bending any pins on its substrate or in its socket. Lower the socket lever and plate and lock the new CPU in place.

Next, clean the chip's heat spreader with isopropyl alcohol or another solvent that won't leave any residue. If its heatsink comes with preapplied thermal compound, remove any plastic film over it. If not, apply a third-party thermal grease according to its directions. Seat the heatsink, attach it to the motherboard, and connect its fan's power cable before you turn your PC on. ■

BY MARTY SEMS

PEST CONTROL

Remove Stubborn Bugs

If a virus slips past your computer's defenses, it's time to roll up your sleeves and go after the bug yourself. Each month, we tell you how to remove some of the most disruptive malware on the Internet. In some cases, software publishers provide free tools that root out deeply entrenched viruses. We show you where to find (and how to use) these removal tools.

VIRUS DOCTOR

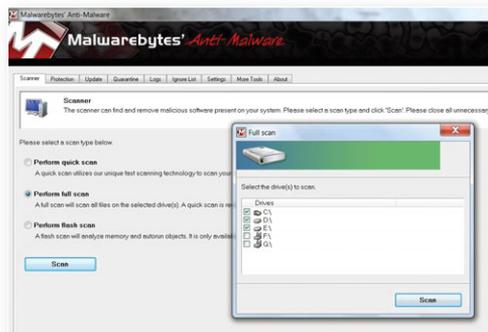
Description:

Virus Doctor, sometimes referred to as VirusDoctor, is a rogue antivirus application. Like most such applications, Virus Doctor tricks you into installing it through the use of phony pop-ups. For instance, you may see a pop-up claiming that you have a malware infection. This pop-up suggests that you use an online scanner, but the scanner it recommends is nothing more than a fake that pretends to scan your system. This fake scanner claims to find numerous infections and recommends installing Virus Doctor to remove them. Like the fake online scanner, Virus Doctor itself only reports fake infections and, of course, you'll need to pay for the "full version" if you want Virus Doctor to remove them.

Note that the pop-up ads that trick you into installing Virus Doctor may be a symptom of additional malware, namely the Vundo Trojan. This Trojan can sneak its way on to your system, and once installed, it will display pop-up ads for various rogue anti-malware applications including Virus Doctor. See "Pest Control" on page 84 in the March 2010 issue for more information about removing the Vundo Trojan.

How To Tell If Virus Doctor Is Installed On Your System

Virus Doctor doesn't try to hide. The user interface looks much like the Windows Security Center, giving it an air of respectability that it doesn't deserve. In addition to conducting fake scans, Virus Doctor may also display annoying pop-up alerts, display pop-up ads, and generally contribute to slowing down your system.



■ If you have multiple hard drives on your PC, Anti-Malware may ask you to select the drives you want to scan. We recommend scanning all hard drives, but you can probably omit optical drives and other removable media.

How To Automatically Remove Virus Doctor

The easiest way to remove Virus Doctor is by using a legitimate anti-malware application, such as Anti-Malware from Malwarebytes. You can download a free version of the software at www.malwarebytes.org.

Save the file to a folder on your system and, once completed, double-click the setup file (Mbam-Setup.exe) to begin the installation. Follow the prompts presented by the installer (the default options will suffice). Before clicking the Finish button and exiting the installer, be sure there are checks next to Update Malwarebytes Anti-Malware and Launch Malwarebytes Anti-Malware.

After exiting the installer, Anti-Malware should download the latest malware definitions and then launch the scanner. Click Perform Full Scan under the Scanner tab and then click the Scan button. It may take some time for the scan to complete depending on the size of your hard drive and the speed of your computer.

Click OK when you see a message indicating that the scan is complete. Click the Show Results button to see infected files. There should be a check next to each file listed. Click Remove Selected to remove all of the files. Once the files are removed, Anti-Malware displays a log file in Notepad. You can review this log if you're curious or close Notepad and Anti-Malware. Your PC should be free of Virus Doctor. ■

BY CHAD DENTON

EXAMINING ERRORS

COMPILED BY KIM QUADE

Error messages rarely provide clear explanations of the problems they represent. Some are riddled with technical jargon. Others have seemingly indecipherable codes. And some tell you exactly what the problem is but don't tell you how to solve it.

Each month, we take the mystery out of error messages that flummox our readers. Every solution includes the message in its original form, a plain-English translation of that message, and step-by-step instructions for solving the problem.

If you have questions about an error message, email us (errormessages@smartcomputing.com), and we'll try to decipher it. Tell us what version of Windows you are using, give the full text of the error message, and provide as many details in your email as possible. Volume prohibits individual replies.

MICROSOFT OFFICE WORD

Error Yearend report/2010. The file name is not valid.

Translation: This message may appear when you are using Microsoft Office Word. It means that, while saving a file, you entered a file name that includes a forward slash (/), a character that is not recognized when naming and saving a Word document.



Solution: Choose a new file name that doesn't include the slash. Other symbols that cannot be used include \, *, ?, <, and >. However, spaces are acceptable, which means you can separate words with spaces, rather than stringing several words together. ■

MICROSOFT OFFICE POWERPOINT

Error The [filename].odp may contain certain features that are not compatible with this format. Do you want to continue to save in this format?

Translation: This error message appears when you try to save a Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007 presentation as an OpenDocument presentation (ODP), which can be opened in, edited, and presented using the OpenOffice.org software Impress.

Solution: The message gives you three options: Yes, No, or Help. If you click No, the Microsoft PowerPoint presentation will not be saved in the OpenDocument format. If you click Yes, your file will be saved in an OpenDocument

format and can be edited in Impress. As the error message states, some of the features used to create the presentation originally in Microsoft may not be available in OpenOffice's Impress.

You may have to edit or adjust some of the slides and the layout to get your project looking the way you want. By clicking Help, you are directed to Microsoft's online support where you can search for more information regarding compatibility between the two programs. ■

OPENOFFICE.ORG

Error This document may contain formatting or content that cannot be saved in the Microsoft Word/97/2000/XP file format. Do you want to save the document in this format anyway? Use the latest ODF file format and be sure all formatting and content is saved correctly.

Translation: This error message appears when you create a document and save it as an ODT (OpenOffice.org text) file using the OpenOffice.org 3 Writer program and then try to resave the file in a Microsoft Office format. It may be the case that you only have access to the OpenOffice.org program installed on your computer, and your colleagues or clients (with whom you want to share the file) can only open documents created with certain older versions of Microsoft products. Basically, the warning is letting you know that if you continue saving the OpenOffice.org file as a Microsoft

document, your content will transfer, but there may be some differences between the formatting and the available features. For example, OpenOffice.org doesn't support macros, some uncommon fonts, and some table of contents and footnote functions.

Solution: The dialog box gives you the option of continuing to save the document in the Microsoft format you've chosen by clicking Keep Current Format. Or, you may choose to save the file in OpenOffice.org by selecting Save In ODF Format. ■

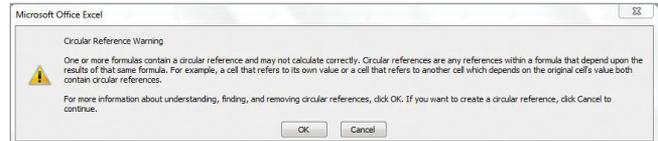
Error

Circular Reference Warning. One or more formulas contain a circular reference and may not calculate correctly. Circular references are any references within a formula that depend upon the results of that same formula. For example, a cell that refers to its own value or a cell that refers to another cell which depends on the original cell's value both contain circular references.

Translation: This error occurs when you are programming Excel to automatically make certain mathematical calculations within your spreadsheet, such as adding a column of numbers. This message might indicate you've entered an incorrect formula—unless you are *trying* to perform a circular reference.

Solution: Click OK if the circular reference was created in error. This automatically opens Microsoft Online Help (if you're connected to the Internet), and it explains what a circular reference is and how to locate it and correct it within your spreadsheet.

When you remove the dialog box from the screen, the formula in the box is set at zero, and the circular reference remains within your spreadsheet. This could cause errors in your calculations. The bottom status bar indicates the cell in



which the circular reference is located, and you can make the appropriate changes in that cell.

Another way to locate the errant formula is to select the Formulas tab. In Formula Auditing, choose Error Checking, click the arrow, and then choose Circular References. This will lead you to the cell or cells containing the circular references; move through the cells until you have corrected all of the errors and the words “Circular Reference” no longer appear on the bottom status bar.

If the circular reference is deliberate, click Cancel. ■

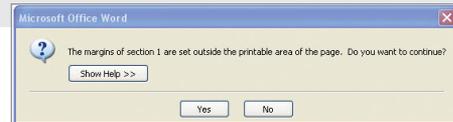
Error

The margins of section 1 are set outside the printable area of the page. Do you want to continue?

Translation: This message will generally appear when you are using Microsoft Word and the margins are set too large (or too small) for your printer. Most printers are not able to print to the edge of the page.

When you select the Show Help button on the dialog box, it directs you to Microsoft's Online Help. This section defines a host of reasons why this message might be generated. For example, it may appear if you are attempting to print to a page size that is not supported by the selected printer or printing a set-sized object that doesn't fit in the printable area.

Solution: If you click Yes to close the message, your document will print, but it's possible that some text may not appear on your printed page. In some cases your document will print without any problems. Click No.



If, however, you have printed the document and all of the text does not appear, there is a way to remedy this. On the Home tab, select Replace in the Editing group (which is located on the far right side of the Ribbon). Click the Go To tab, click Section, and in the Enter Section Number box, type 1 (or the section number identified in the error message). Click the Go To button and Close.

From the Page Layout tab choose Page Setup and open the Page Layout dialog box by clicking the arrow at the bottom-right corner of the box. A message appears that reads: “One or more margins are set outside the printable area of the page. Choose the Fix button to increase the appropriate margins.”

When you click Fix, the computer automatically changes the margins to the printer's acceptable standards. Continue this procedure until all margins in all sections have been changed. ■



Error Messages Online

Error Messages

If you're getting a specific error message, this is the place to start.

[Browse Error Messages Alphabetically](#) (Try this first.)
[Search By Error Message Text](#)



Don't see your error message here? Visit the *Smart Computing* Tech Support Center (www.smartcomputing.com/techsupport) to search our database of common error messages and PC problems.

SOFTWARE UPDATES

COMPILED BY JOANNA CLAY

When it comes to protecting your software, installing the latest updates is one of the most important steps you can take. Software updates fix bugs, plug security holes, and sometimes even add new features. Here are the updates you should know about this month.

Mac OS X

Update: The Mac OS X v10.6.6 Update is for the Mac OS X Snow Leopard operating system. It includes OS fixes that address general security issues. The upgrade also installs the new Mac App Store, which will download to the Dock. The Mac App Store is similar to the App Store for the iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad. You can browse featured apps, top charts, and other store categories such as games, navigation, and productivity. You can use your iTunes account to purchase apps.

Installation: To install this update, direct your browser to www.apple.com. Click Support in the navigation bar. Select Software under Browse Support. In the Mac OS X section, click Mac OS X and then click Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard. Find the Apple Downloads section on the left and click Mac OS X v10.6.6 Update under Recent Updates. You can read the full update description on the next page. Click the Download button and wait for the download to finish. Open the file to start installing the update.

Microsoft Office For Mac

Update: Version 14.0.2 of Microsoft Office for Mac 2011 offers improvements in the areas of reliability, stability, and future updates. The update corrects an issue that prevented Office for Mac documents from opening in third-party programs. It also fixes a bug that creates a message asking users to close the Microsoft AutoUpdate while an update is running. This version increases the stability of Outlook by fixing crashes that occur when a user imports a PST file.



Opera 11 features new “visual mouse gestures” that streamline actions you would perform in a browser.

Installation: You can download and install the Microsoft Office for Mac 2011 update at bit.ly/hxqjyc. Start by clicking the Download button. The update will then download in your browser after several minutes. When the download is finished, find the file location and open it to begin installing the update.

Opera

Update: The latest version of the Opera Internet browser, Opera 11.01, adds some new features and upgrades the browser overall. Tab stacking, a safer Address field, visual mouse gesturing, extensions, and a mail panel are among the five new browsing features added. Tab stacking lets you drag a single tab on top of another to create a tab group, which allows for more tab organization within your browser window. When you click the new secure Web badge in the Address bar, you can view your secure connection

and the current Web site’s security record. Holding down the right mouse button reveals the “visual gestures” you can perform with your mouse. Extensions and the mail panel include new functionalities that streamline your browser interaction.

Installation: Install this update by going to www.opera.com. Next, go to Browsers on the black bar at the top of the Web page. Click Opera For PC, Mac & Linux and click Download Opera. Click Run in the File Download – Security Warning window. Follow the installation wizard instructions to complete your download of Opera 11.

MacBook Air

Update: The MacBook Air (Late 2010) Software Update 2.0 provides a solution for MacBook Air systems that won’t enter Sleep mode. It applies to Mac OS X 10.6.6.

Installation: To acquire this download, go to www.apple.com. Click Support in the upper-right corner of the Web page. Next, in the Get Support section, click Mac under the images of the Mac computer and MacBook Air. In the Notebooks category, click MacBook Air. Select Downloads. Under MacBook Air Recent Downloads, you should see the MacBook Air (Late 2010) Software Update 2.0. Click the Download button. Let the download finish in your browser and then open the file to install the update.

PDFCreator

Update: The 1.2.0 release of PDFCreator, free software that creates PDF (Portable Document Format) files from any printable program, fixes printing issues in certain

applications and programs. The new version also supports transparent PNG files. PDFCreator can create other file formats, such as PNG, JPEG, TIFF, BMP, PCX, PS, and EPS. You can digitally sign PDFs to verify authentication, secure them with encryption, and combine multiple files into a single PDF.

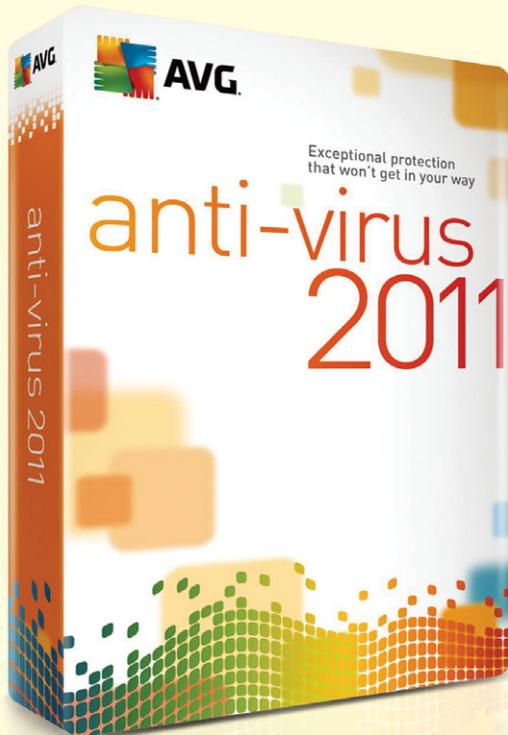
Installation: To take advantage of the new PDFCreator features, go to www.pdfforge.org and click Download at the top of the home page. Click Download PDFCreator 1.2.0 on the first red PDFCreator button. The site will open a new window with the URL www.sourceforge.net; your file download should start in the browser momentarily. Click the PDFCreator EXE file, select Run, and follow the instructions to complete the download.

Adobe Flash Player

Update: Adobe Flash Player 10.2 is available. The updated capabilities include Stage Video hardware acceleration for image rendering, Internet Explorer 9 support for hardware-accelerated graphics, customized mouse cursors, and full-screen mode for multiple monitors.

Installation: To get the update, visit get.adobe.com/flashplayer. By default, the update will also install the Google Toolbar on your computer. If you'd rather not install the toolbar, uncheck the Include In Your Download box and then click the Download Now button. When a yellow bar appears at the top of the page, click it and then click Install ActiveX Control. Click Continue if the UAC (User Account Control) message appears. Finally, click the Install button.

UPDATE OF THE MONTH



AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition 2011

Update: AVG's latest 2011 version of its free security software is available for download. The updated edition provides basic protection against online threats using the AVG LinkScanner. AVG also safeguards your social networking activity with AVG Social Networking Protection. AVG Community Protection Network and AVG Protective Cloud Technology offer real-time virus information, as well.

Installation: When you visit www.free.avg.com, click Get Basic Protection next to the Homepage tab. Then, click the Download button under AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition 2011. On the next page, click Download again. You will be directed to the Cnet.com download page on which you will click Download Now. Lastly, click the EXE file, click Run, and complete the rest of the download instructions.

AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition 2011 includes AVG Social Networking Protection so you can connect with Facebook friends in a safe virtual environment.

Microsoft Office 2010

Excel's New Sparklines

Quick Studies
How-To

Office Suite
Intermediate

It seems like every version of Microsoft Excel released over the years has brought a faster way of making charts. Excel 2010 takes the evolution to a completely new concept with the introduction of sparklines. Excel's regular charts are already pretty quick to create, but with the tiny sparkline charts, you can have instant micro charts in the same row as the data they portray. Because the small charts are embedded throughout a worksheet, it's easy to provide at-a-glance data summaries right next to the data, wherever it occurs. Sparklines are compact enough that they won't take up a lot of space on the worksheet or interrupt the overall look, and when you print a worksheet, the sparklines print, too.

revenues showed a profit or loss. And once you've created a sparkline, it automatically adjusts itself each time its source data changes.

Create Sparklines

Assuming your worksheet already contains cells full of data, here's how to create sparkline charts that tell the story. Click the cell where you want the sparkline to appear, then go to the Ribbon's Insert tab and click one of the chart types in the Sparklines section. After you select a chart type, such as Line, a dialog box asks you to select the cell range that will provide the chart's information. You can simply highlight the correct cells to tell Excel what information to use.

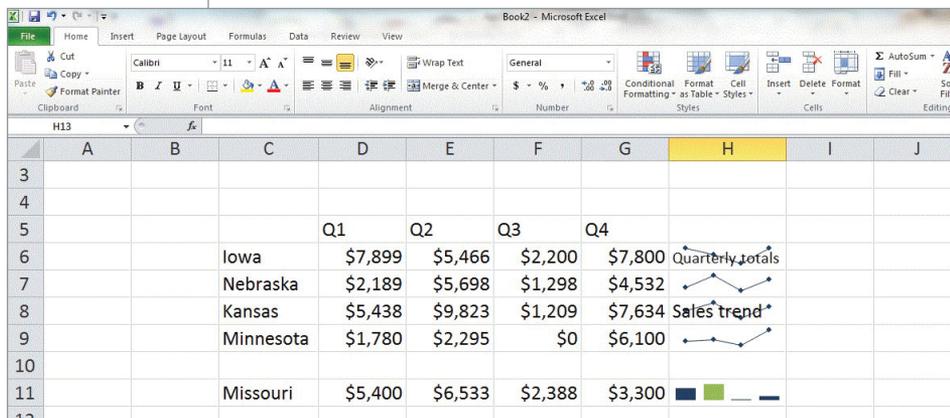
After your new sparkline appears in the cell, you can customize it with several tools that appear on the Ribbon. A group of checkboxes lets you indicate which data points are marked with a little box on a line chart. Markers is a good choice, as it puts a box on each data point. Color tools let you choose colors for the markers and the data line itself.

If you want to create several sparklines at the ends of several rows of data, highlight the entire block of cells. Then, click a sparkline type on the Insert tab. When the dialog box appears, highlight the cells that will contain the charts and click OK.

If you already have a series of sparklines, you can instantly add another one (assuming there's data to support it) by clicking the last cell that contains a sparkline and dragging the fill handle onto new cells.

As you format sparklines, remember that Excel treats groups of sparklines as a unit. If you highlight the last sparkline in a group of four, you'll see that any formatting changes you make will be applied to all the sparklines.

If you want to remove a sparkline, simply right-click its cell and choose Sparklines and Clear Selected Sparklines. ■



Excel's new sparkline feature lets you quickly insert micro charts next to the source data, providing at-a-glance summaries of your information.

Sparklines require you to shift your thinking about charts a bit in this way: They don't exist as separate objects in the worksheet. They live right inside a cell, just like a number or text. This integrates them fully into the data they represent. If you cut and paste a group of cells, you can highlight the sparkline's cell, too, and move it right along with the data. And because the sparkline lives in the cell's background, you can put text messages over the top of the little charts in statements, such as "110% growth over last year!"

A Variety Of Choices

The variety of available sparklines lets you graphically show rather detailed data trends or choose simple representations that indicate base information, such as whether a quarter's

BY TREVOR MEERS

ACTION EDITOR

Are you having trouble finding a product or getting adequate service from a manufacturer? If so, we want to help solve your problem. Send us a description of the product you're seeking or the problem you're having with customer service. In billing disputes, include relevant information (such as account numbers or screen names for online services) and photocopies of checks. Include your phone number in case we need to contact you.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity; volume prohibits individual replies.



Write to:
Action Editor
P.O. Box 85380
Lincoln, NE 68501-5380

Or send an email to:
actioneditor@smart
computing.com

Or fax us at:
(402) 479-2104

Refunds From HP & An Air Force Base Exchange

I purchased an AMD Radeon HD 5770 graphics card from Luke Air Force Base Exchange (Glendale, Ariz.), and when I installed it, it failed to boot. I tried a number of things and couldn't even get the thing to show the board screen. I tried to return it to the Exchange, and reps told me that the policy is that if you open the box, it cannot be returned. I asked them how I could find out if it worked if I didn't open the package and install it to use it. They told me I had to send it in to the manufacturer. I tried to contact AMD and couldn't even register the item. Then I tried to make out an RMA (return merchandise authorization), and that failed because the product item number on the package is invalid. Then I went on the AMD site again and got a response indicating I had to return the card to the retailer. Is there any way that you can help me in this matter?

**Weldon D.
 Glendale, Ariz.**

We looked up the general manager of the Exchange through the Army & Air Force Exchange Service site and sent him an email detailing Weldon's difficulty in returning the defunct graphics card. Less than an hour later, Weldon told us that the GM had contacted him about the problem. In a later phone call, Weldon said, the GM offered him a full refund. The GM also said that he would clarify to the Exchange sales staff that unlike software, graphics cards could indeed be returned, even after their packages are opened. The card manufacturer was actually Diamond Multimedia, not AMD, which only produced the

graphics chip onboard. This explained why AMD couldn't help Weldon with tech support or his RMA request. Weldon returned to the Exchange and received his refund.

I ordered a set of USB Powered Speakers from HP last week, part number KK912AA and received them yesterday. I set them up, but when I tried to load the software for SRS Premium Sound from the included CD, it told me that it is a 32-bit version and to get the proper CD for the 64-bit version from HP. My system runs Windows 7 Professional and is a 64-bit system. I spent the better part of six hours on the phone with HP Customer Support, which shuffled my call all over the world for an answer without resolution. In fact, no one knew what I was talking about. Then I tried to get an RMA number to return the speakers and ran into the same problem for another two hours. I would like to enlist your help in this matter. I think a proper resolution might be obtaining the 64-bit software or returning the speakers for a credit.

**Ray K.
 Longs, S.C.**

We asked HP's media relations to direct us to someone with the authority to help Ray right away, as he had already spent eight hours on the phone with the company (and would ultimately spend about 11.5 hours, all told). A public relations executive told us she would take care of Ray's issue immediately. A few more lengthy phone calls later, HP issued Ray a full refund, including his shipping costs. The company even told him to keep the speakers. **I**

Slimming Down

by Gregory Anderson

I'm thinking about ditching a few extra pounds. The inexorable march of age provides a powerful motivation to reassess whether extra bulk is hindering my flexibility and engendering long-term costs. That's right: I'm wondering whether I really need traditional (and heavy) desktop computers taking up space in the office and in the nook. An increasing number of people and companies are asking themselves the same thing. I run into more and more professionals and small-business owners who are abandoning traditional desktops and notebooks for smaller, cheaper, and more portable devices. A few years ago, the question wouldn't even have made sense, but the explosion of netbooks, tablets, and smartphones has opened new possibilities for those looking to control their costs and simplify their technology environments. Of course, we all fall into *that* camp, but the slimming down isn't always as easy as it sounds.

I have friends in sales who ditched laptops and now don't slog through airports with anything but their iPads. If your main concerns are cost and maintenance, and if you don't have a need for powerful hardware or specialized software, you're probably a good candidate for a skinnier machine. On the other hand, remember that the main reason all these mobile devices can be so small, so light, and so cheap is that they're not very powerful. Small screens, tightly integrated hardware, and relatively meager processing power keep costs down and battery life high. They also make it hard to support graphic design, power gaming, or number crunching. But if your needs center around email, Web browsing, and office productivity applications, almost any netbook or tablet can handle the work.

I also know shopkeepers and software developers who get by just fine with their netbooks. Being ill-equipped to handle serious actuarial analysis or database development doesn't mean these mini machines can't handle purchasing and inventory or Web design. Software is a common concern with PC replacements, but you can download almost anything you can imagine directly from manufacturers' sites or from application stores.

Alternatively, skip the entire installation process and switch to distributed applications such as Google Docs. You can create, share, and manage spreadsheets, presentations, and documents over the Web at no cost. So who's really going to miss the process of bringing home a box and popping in a disc to install new programs?

Storage is another potential issue. Small hard drives and limited possibilities for upgrading hardware leave many business people wondering how they'll handle all their data. Combine a netbook's USB ports and an external hard drive (1TB [terabyte] for under a hundred bucks), and those concerns evaporate. Even the USB-less iPad offers ways to store plenty of data, and there are myriad online services providing secure and redundant storage to help maintain all the capacity you need while

lightening your footprint and preserving your budget.

All this mobility comes with a price, however. When you can work anywhere, you can also slack off anywhere, a fact to which both my local coffee shop and the lounge chair on our deck can readily attest. And the places you're most likely to imagine that you'd enjoy working in are the very places you're most likely to find other things you'd rather do. This phenomenon feels eerily similar to the fact that I have trouble curbing late-night snacking while watching "Chopped" and "Top Chef" on Hulu. I'm not one for getting too old-fashioned or nostalgic, especially about technology, but sometimes having a specific place dedicated for work (where work also stays behind when you're done) actually makes me more productive. Make sure you or your workers are professional and disciplined enough to handle the responsibility that comes with the freedom of portable gadgets. Otherwise, like with a failed diet, you'll see all those cost and maintenance savings come right back in a different spot. ■



Gregory Anderson is a regular contributor to Smart Computing and several other technology publications. He keeps a sharp eye (with the help of thick glasses) on computing trends and enjoys working with geeks of all stripes—most of the time. Share your own netbook narrative at gregory-anderson@smartcomputing.com.

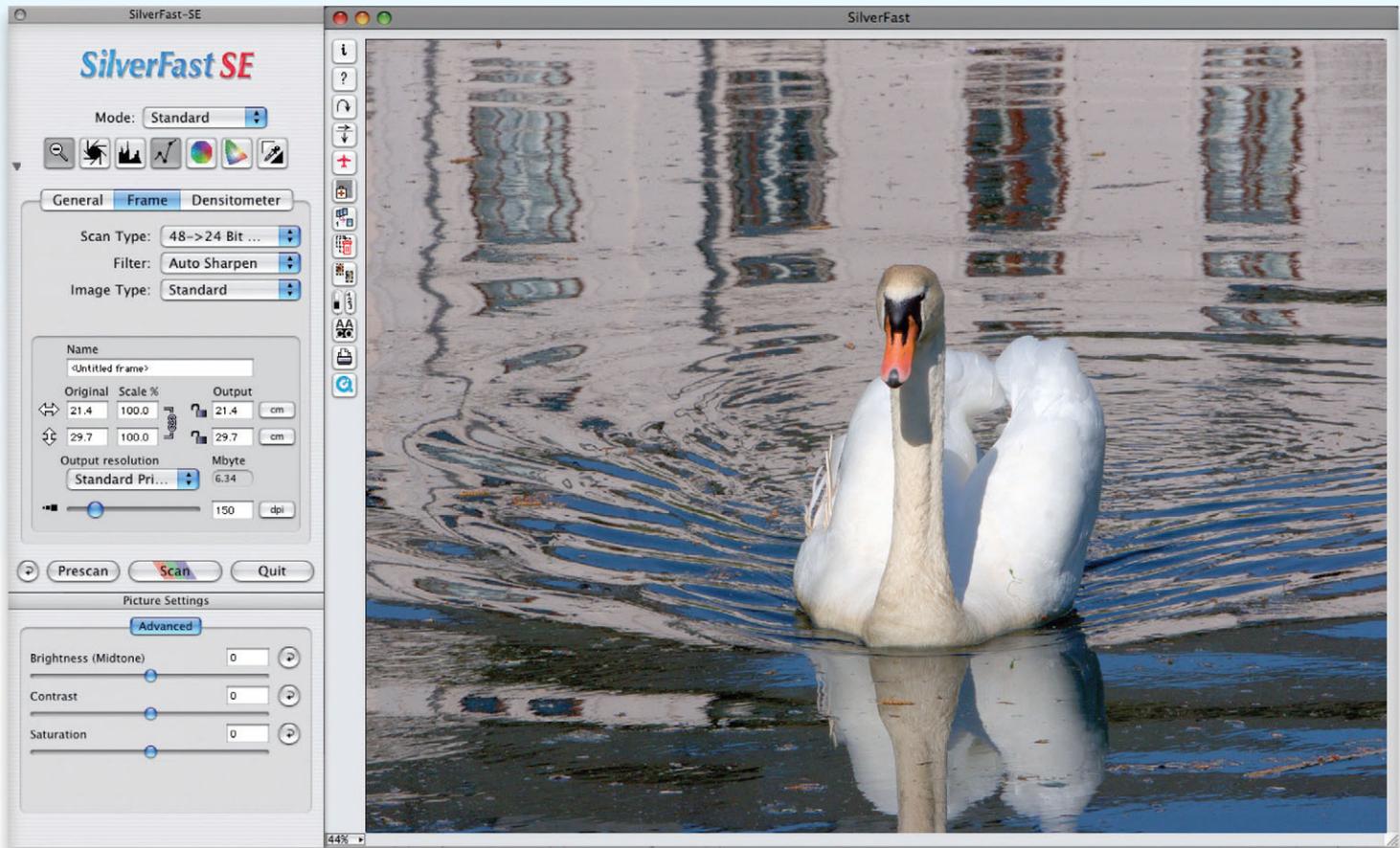


Since 1979, Sandhills Publishing has produced publications covering technology beginning with the introduction of *Processor*. Over the years, the company has developed a complete line of computing publications, encompassing *Smart Computing*, *PC Today*, *Computer Power User*, and *First Glimpse*. Our plain-English approach has served audiences well for 30 years, ensuring they receive accurate and unbiased technology information to meet their needs.



SilverFast® SE Plus

WORLDWIDE REGARDED AS THE PROFESSIONAL
STANDARD FOR SCAN SOFTWARE



"If you are still digitizing with the manufacturer's software, you will be amazed of the possibilities offered by SilverFast 6.6."

Publishing Praxis 10/2008

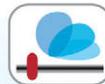
SilverFast SE Plus is specially designed for those who want to enter the world of digital image processing. Images will benefit immensely from SilverFast's intelligent automatic functions which help to make the editing process much easier. Predictable color from the SilverFast SE preview gives imaging and color reproduction a new dimension, securing the correct workflow with the ScanPilot. SilverFast SE Plus can be used as a standalone application or as a plug-in for Photoshop.

Selected SilverFast® Features



AutoAdjust

Select an appropriate image type preset and optimize your image automatically with a single mouseclick.



Multi-Exposure

Scanning slides Multi-Exposure improves the Dynamic Range of most scanners, reduces noise and brings up more picture details.



Preview Concept

Any correction is visible in the preview window in realtime.



USM (Unsharp Masking)

The luminance-based calculation of brightness values ensures sharpness without effecting saturation or tone values of the image.



QuickTime Movies

SilverFast tutorial movies are available directly from the program dialogs.